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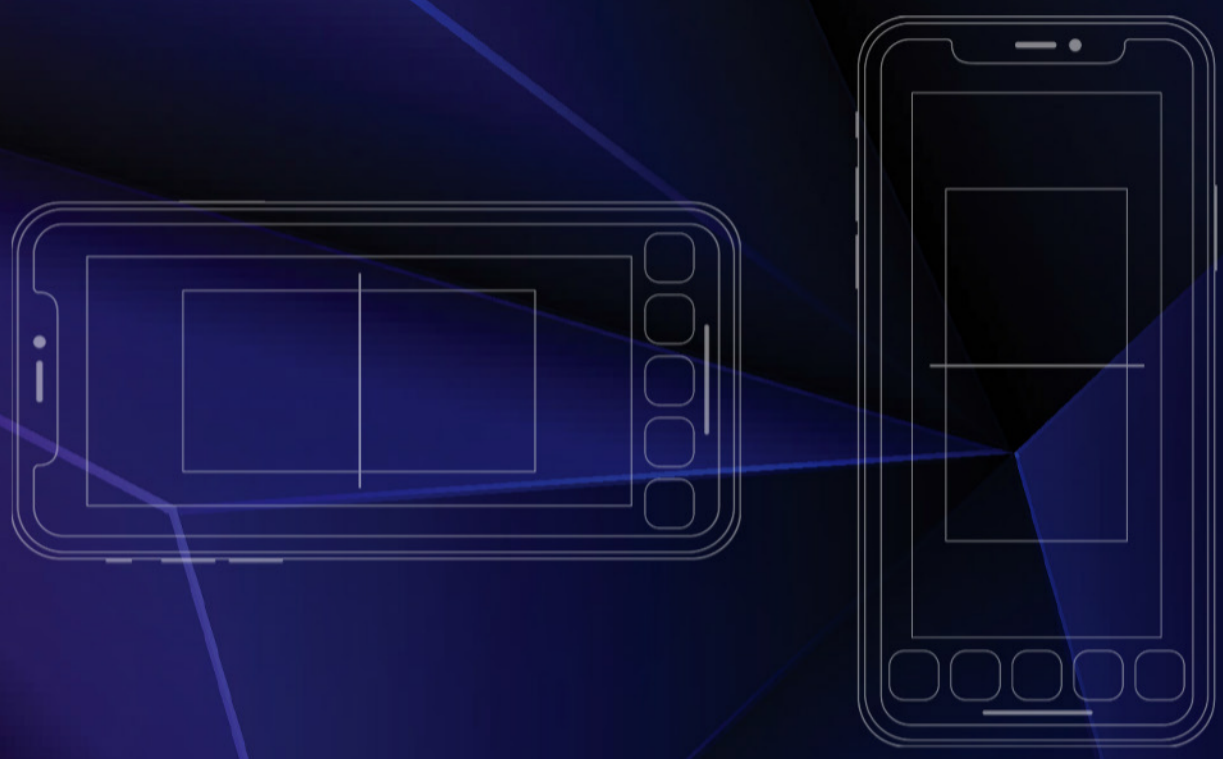

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EV MAKER TESLA BREAKS GROUND ON MEGAPACK ENERGY STORAGE BATTERY FACTORY IN SHANGHAI

ESLA

Electric vehicle maker Tesla has begun construction of a factory in Shanghai to make its Megapack energy storage batteries, Chinese state media reported Thursday.

The $200 million plant in Shanghai's Lingang pilot free trade zone will be the first Tesla battery plant outside the United States.

Tesla opened an EV plant in Shanghai in 2019 that assembles cars for China, Europe and other overseas markets. It is the No. 2 seller in the booming Chinese market for electric vehicles. The market leader is Chinese auto company BYD.

The state-run Xinhua News Agency lauded Tesla's commitment to investing in China and "defying the rhetoric of 'decoupling' and 'de-risking' from China."

It said the factory was slated to start mass production in early 2025, with an initial capacity of 10,000 Megapack units a year.

According to Tesla's website, each Megapack can store more than 3.9 megawatt hours of energy — enough to power an average of 3,600 homes for one hour. They are designed mainly for utility companies and commercial facilities.

Such storage units have become increasingly important with the growth in solar and wind energy, which only generate electricity when weather conditions are favorable and need to store it for when residential and commercial users need it.

China is by far the world leader in installing wind and solar capacity, making it a major market for energy storage.

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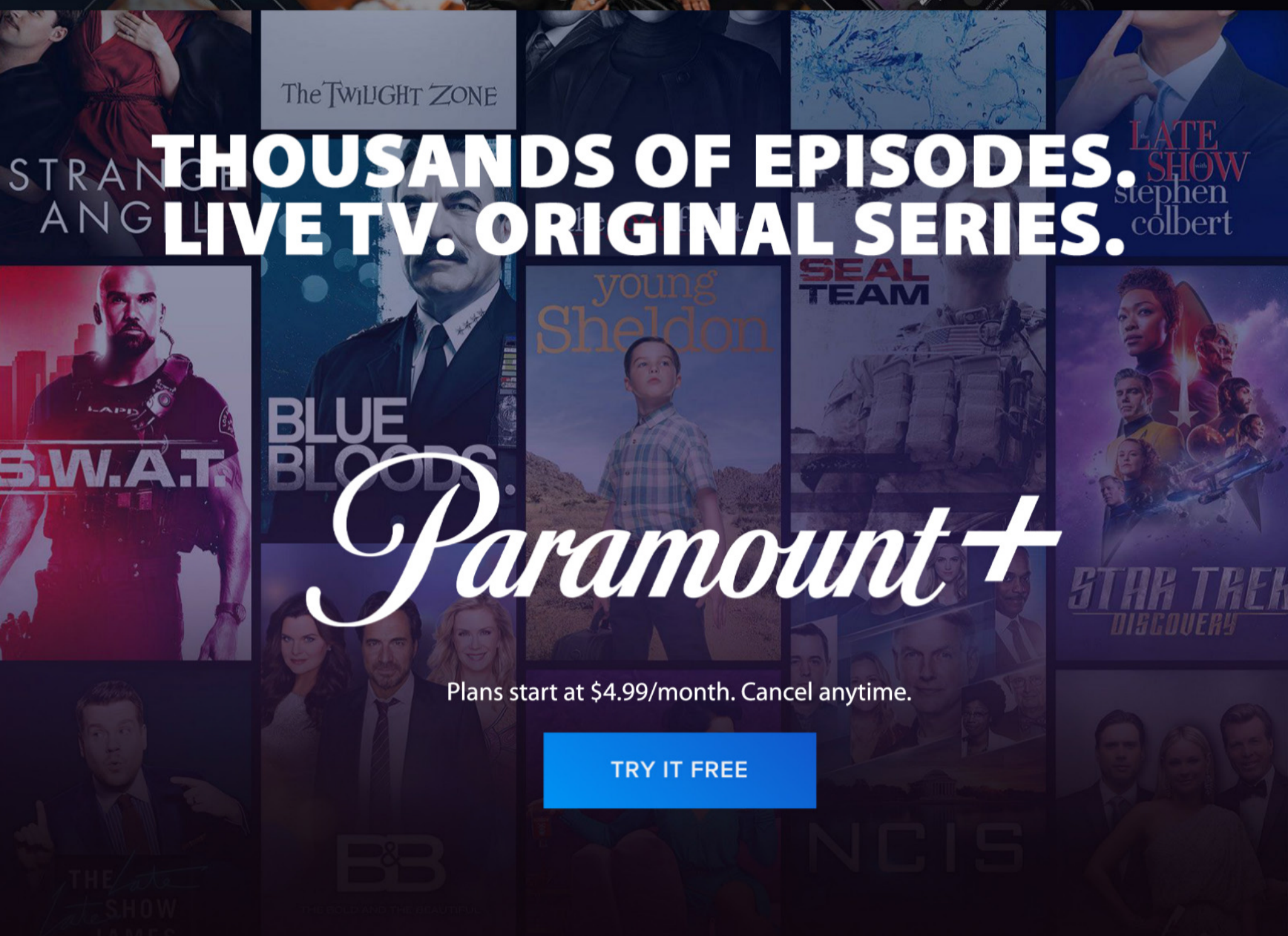

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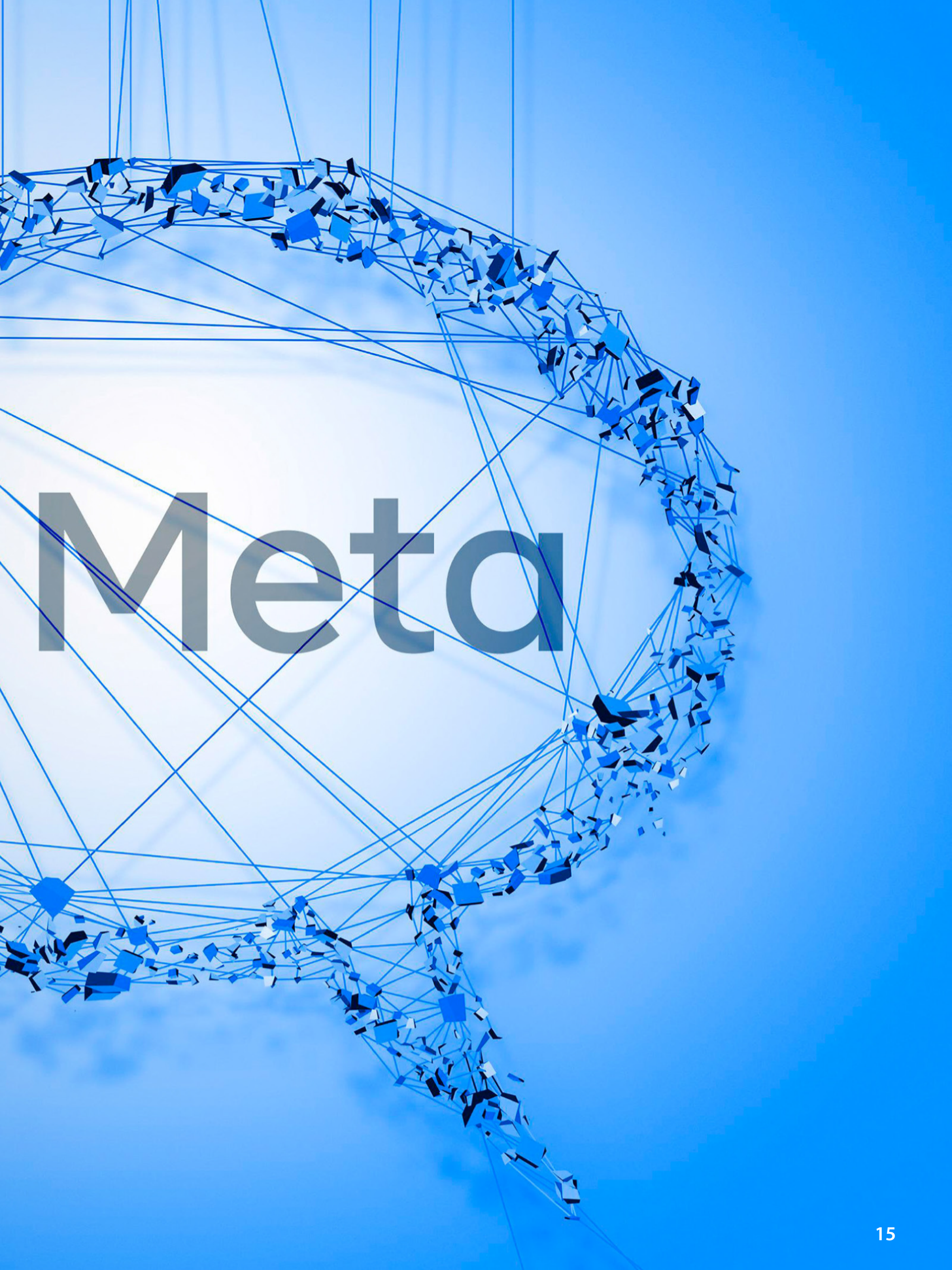
TECH TIP: WANT TO TURN OFF META AI? YOU CAN'T, BUT THERE ARE SOME WORKAROUNDS


Meta

If you use Facebook, WhatsApp or Instagram, you've probably noticed a new character pop up answering search queries or eagerly offering tidbits of information in your feeds, with varying degrees of accuracy.

It's Meta AI, and it's here to help, at least according to Meta Platforms' CEO Mark Zuckerberg, who calls it "the most intelligent AI assistant that you can freely use."

The chatbot can recommend local restaurants, offer more information on something you see in a Facebook post, search for airline flights or generate images in the blink of an eye. If you're chatting with friends to plan a night out, you can invite it into your group conversation by typing @MetaAI, then ask it to recommend, say, cocktail bars.

Meta's AI tool has been integrated into chat boxes and search bars throughout the tech giant's platforms. The assistant appears, for example, at the top of your chat list on Messenger. Ask it questions about anything or to "imagine" something and it will generate a picture or animation.

As with any new technology, there are, of course, hiccups, including bizarre exchanges when the chatbots first started engaging with real people. One joined a Facebook moms' group to talk about its gifted child. Another tried to give away nonexistent items to confused members of a Buy Nothing forum.

Meta AI hasn't been universally welcomed. Here are some tips if you want to avoid using it:

Meta

CAN I TURN IT OFF?

Some Facebook users don't like the chatbot, complaining in online forums that they're tired of having AI foisted on them all the time or that they just want to stick with what they know. So what if you don't want Meta AI butting in every time you search for something or scroll through your social feeds? Well, you might need a time machine. Meta and other tech companies are in an AI arms race, churning out new language models and persuading — some might say pressuring — the public to use them.

The bad news is there's no one button to turn off Meta AI on Facebook, Instagram, Messenger or WhatsApp. However, if you want to limit it, there are some (imperfect) workarounds.

MUTE...SORT OF

On the Facebook mobile app, tap the "search" button. You may get a prompt to "Ask Meta AI anything." Tap the blue triangle on the right, then the blue circle with an "i" inside it. Here, you'll see a "mute" button, with options to silence the chatbot for 15 minutes or longer, or "Until I change it." You can do the same on Instagram.

Nonetheless, muting doesn't get rid of Meta AI completely. Meta AI's circle logo might still appear where the search magnifying glass used to be — and tapping on it will take you to the Meta AI field. This is now the new way to search in Meta, and just as with Google's AI summaries, the responses will be generated by AI.

I asked the chatbot about searching Facebook without Meta AI results.

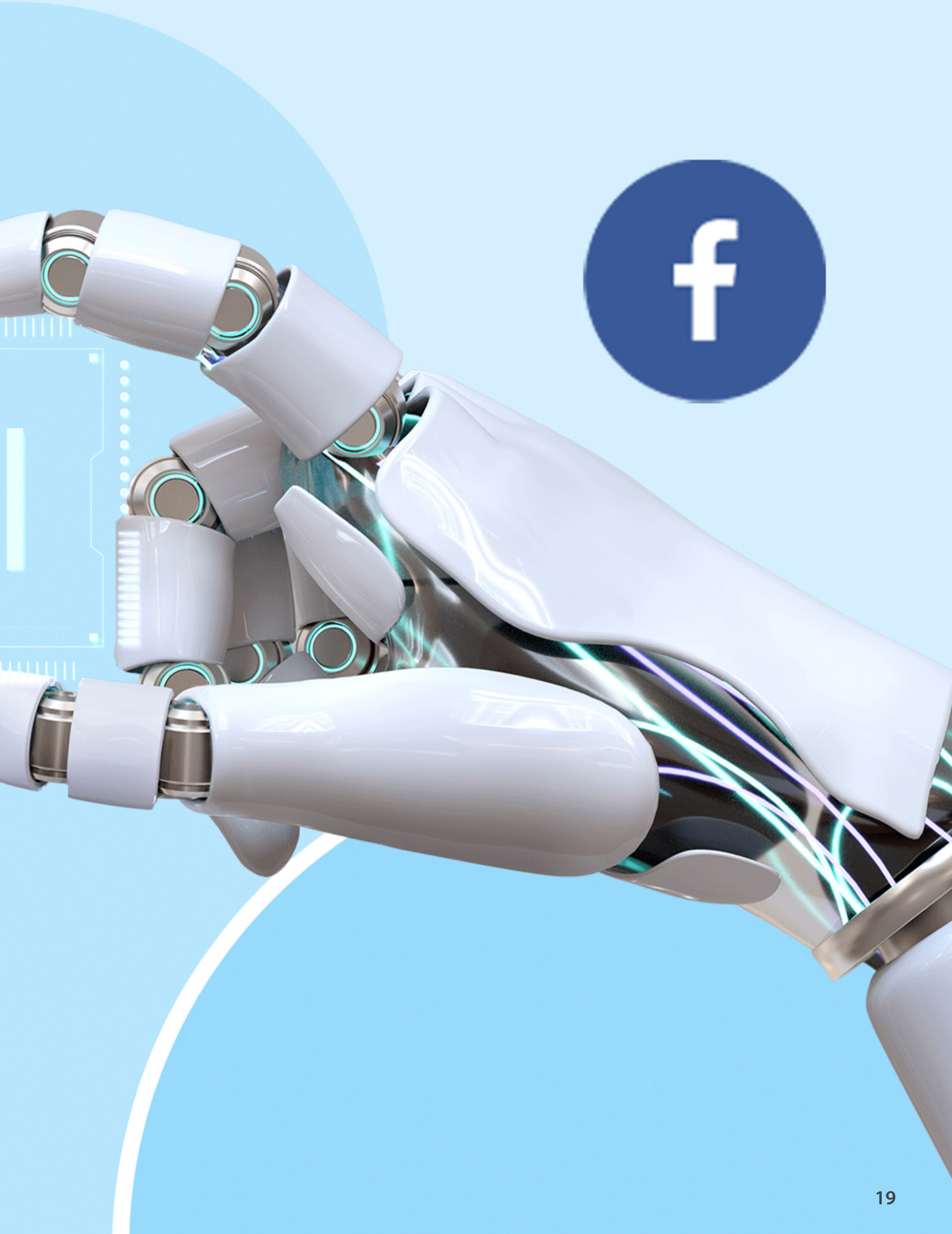


Image: Stephen Lam

"Meta AI aims to be a helpful assistant and is in the search bar to assist with your questions," it responded. Then it added, "You can't disable it from this experience, but you can tap the search button after writing your query and search how you normally would."

Then I asked a (human) Meta spokesperson.

"You can search how you normally would and choose to engage with a variety of results — ones from Meta AI or others that appear as you type," the spokesperson said in a statement. "And when interacting with Meta AI, you have access to real-time information without having to leave the app you're using thanks to our search partnerships."

Like an over-eager personal assistant, Meta AI also pops up under posts on your Facebook news feed, offering more information about what's discussed in the post — such as the subject of a news article. It's not possible to disable this feature, so you'll just have to ignore it.

USE OLD SCHOOL FACEBOOK

Tech websites have noted that one surefire way to avoid Facebook's AI assistant is to use the social network's stripped-down mobile site, mbasic.facebook.com. It's aimed at people in developing countries using older phones on slower internet connections. The basic site has a retro feel that looks crude compared to the current version, and it looks even worse on desktop browsers, but it still works on a rudimentary level and without AI.

OTHER COUNTRIES

Meta AI is so far only available in the United States and 13 other countries including Australia, Canada, Ghana, Jamaica, Malawi, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. So if you don't live in any of those places, you don't have to worry about the chatbot because you don't get to use it. At least not yet.

Meta

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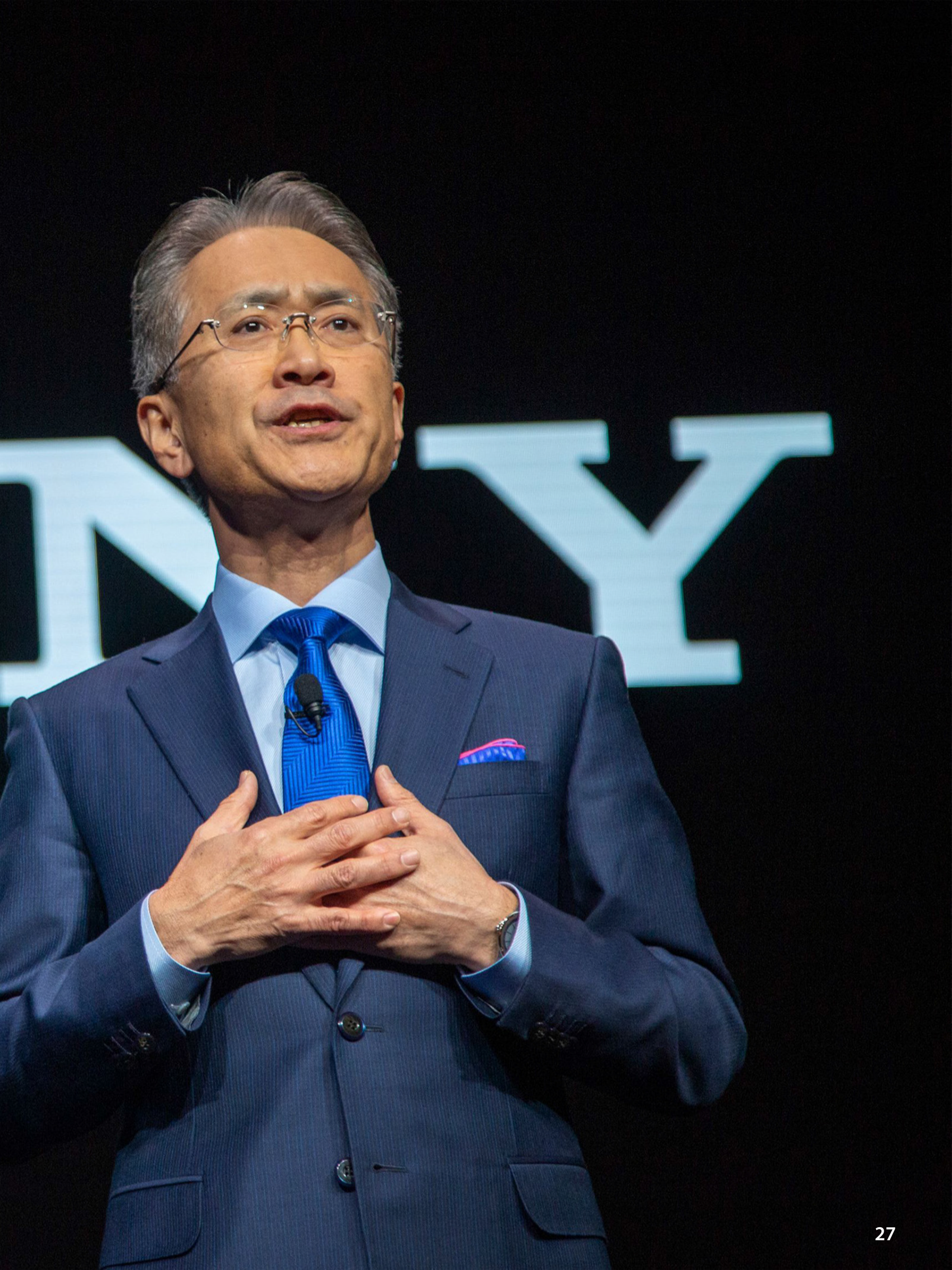
SONY SAYS FOCUS IS ON CREATIVITY, WITH GAMES, MOVIES, MUSIC, SENSORS, IP, AND NOT GADGETS



Paramount

Japanese electronics and entertainment company Sony says it's focusing on creativity in movies, animation and video games, rather than old-fashioned gadgetry.

Its chief executive, Kenichiro Yoshida, outlined the company's strategy Thursday, saying Sony was helping creative professionals deliver what he called "kando," or a moving experience.

Yoshida did not speak about reports Tokyo-based Sony and Apollo Global Management are interested in buying Paramount Global.

Yoshida said the company is now emphasizing the creative process itself instead of prized products of the past like the Walkman portable music player and Trinitron color TVs. He said "synergies" are no longer between entertainment and electronics, but determined by intellectual property spanning animation, music, games and films.

"We will continue to support people's creativity through our technology," he said in an online briefing.

Sony is adapting to tougher times, with rivals making cheaper but competitive electronics. Critics say venturing into movies, music and other entertainment can be unprofitable.

Starting with its acquisition of EMI Music Publishing in 2018, Sony has invested approximately 1.5 trillion yen ($10 billion) in the last six years to strengthen its content creation.

In 2021 it acquired Crunchyroll, which has more than 13 million paid subscribers and delivers Japanese animation globally. Another was Yoasobi, a Japanese music duo

that includes Vocaloid technology, or singing voice synthesizer software, and is attracting global fans.

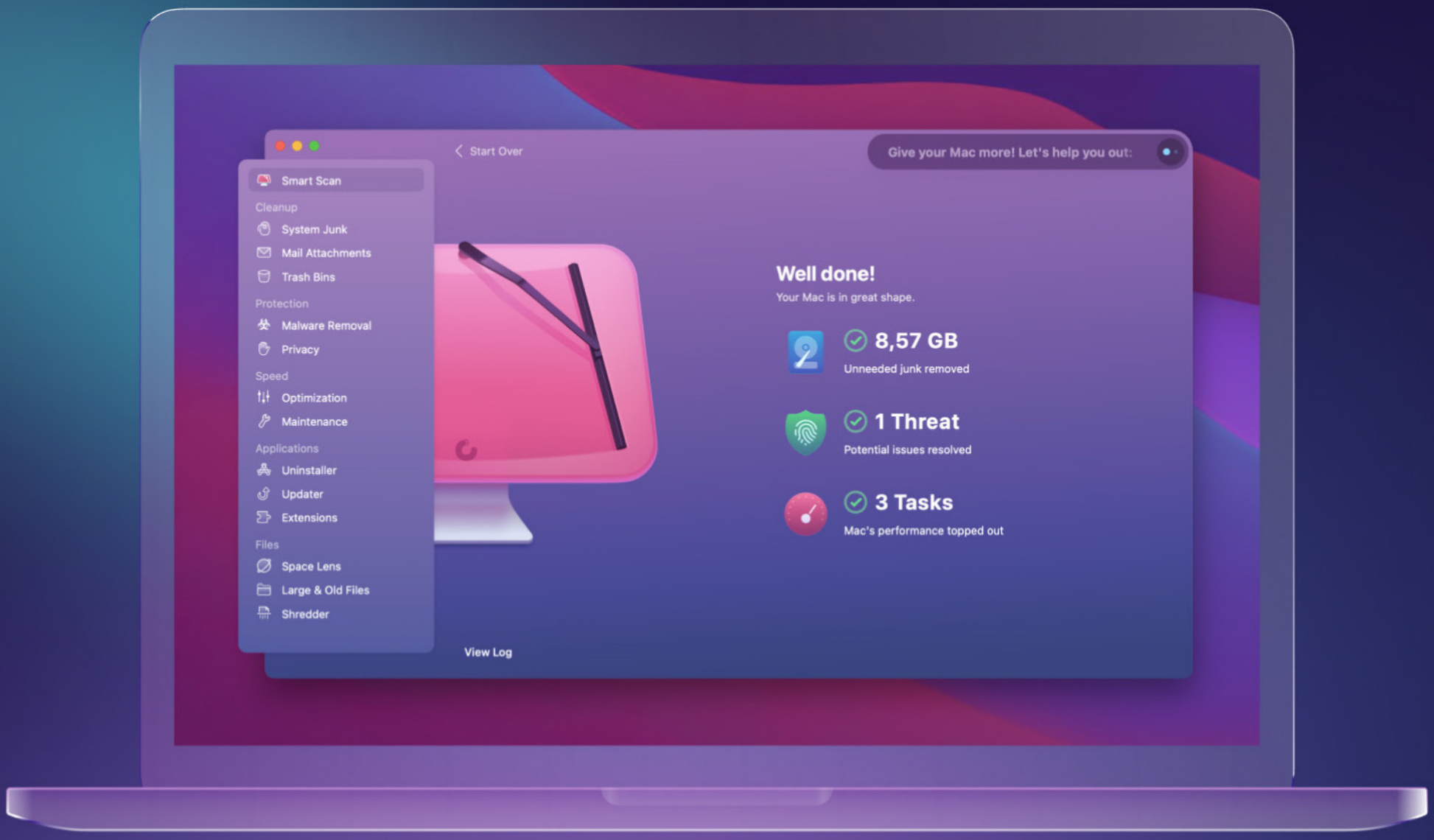
Sony's real-time computing technology that records "this moment," as Yoshida put it, is being used in cameras at sports events because it can capture quickly moving subjects without distortion.

It's also used for news coverage and editing and in 3D video and computer graphics, including hit movies like "Godzilla Minus One," and games based on human athletes' movements, according to Yoshida.

Sony recently reported its quarterly profit rose to 189 billion yen ($1.2 billion) from 141 billion yen the year before. Quarterly sales for the maker of the PlayStation game machines rose 14% to 3.48 trillion yen ($22 billion).

But for the fiscal year through March, Sony recorded a 3% decline in profit at 970 billion yen ($6.2 billion) due to a weak performance in its financial services segment, which will be partially spun off next year.

SONY



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AMAZON GETS FAA APPROVAL ALLOWING IT TO EXPAND DRONE DELIVERIES FOR ONLINE ORDERS

Federal regulators have given Amazon key permission that will allow it to expand its drone delivery program, the company announced Thursday.

In a blog post published on its website, Seattle-based Amazon said that the Federal Aviation Administration has given its Prime Air delivery service the OK to operate drones "beyond visual line of sight," removing a barrier that has prevented its drones from traveling longer distances.

With the approval, Amazon pilots can now operate drones remotely without seeing it with their own eyes. An FAA spokesperson said the approval applies to College Station, Texas, where the company launched drone deliveries in late 2022.

Amazon said its planning to immediately scale its operations in that city in an effort to reach customers in more densely populated areas. It says the approval from regulators also "lays the foundation" to scale its operations to more locations around the country.

Businesses have wanted simpler rules that could open neighborhood skies to new commercial applications of drones, but privacy advocates and some airplane and balloon pilots remain wary.

Amazon, which has sought this permission for years, said it received approval from regulators after developing a strategy that ensures its drones could detect and avoid obstacles in the air.

Furthermore, the company said it submitted other engineering information to the FAA and conducted flight demonstrations in front of federal inspectors. Those demonstrations were also done "in the presence of real planes, helicopters, and a hot air balloon to demonstrate how the drone safely navigated away from each of them," Amazon said.

Image: Seth Wenig

The FAA's approval marks a key step for the company, which has had ambitions to deliver online orders through drones for more than a decade. During a TV interview in 2013, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos said drones would be flying to customer's homes within five years. However, the company's progress was delayed amid regulatory setbacks.

Last month, Amazon said it would close a drone delivery site in Lockeford, California - one of only two in the nation - and open another one later this year in Tolleson, Arizona, a city located west of Phoenix.

By the end of the decade, the company has a goal of delivering 500 million packages by drone every year.

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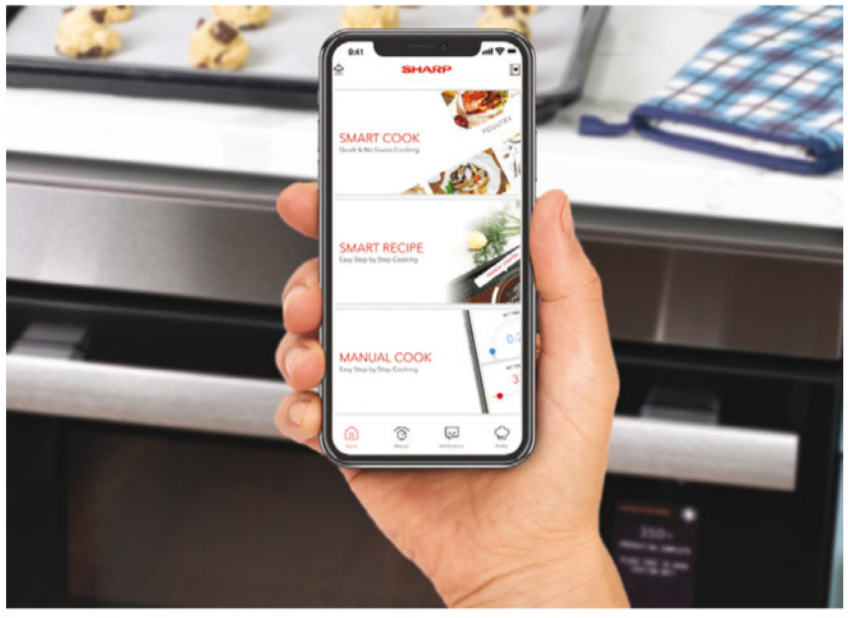

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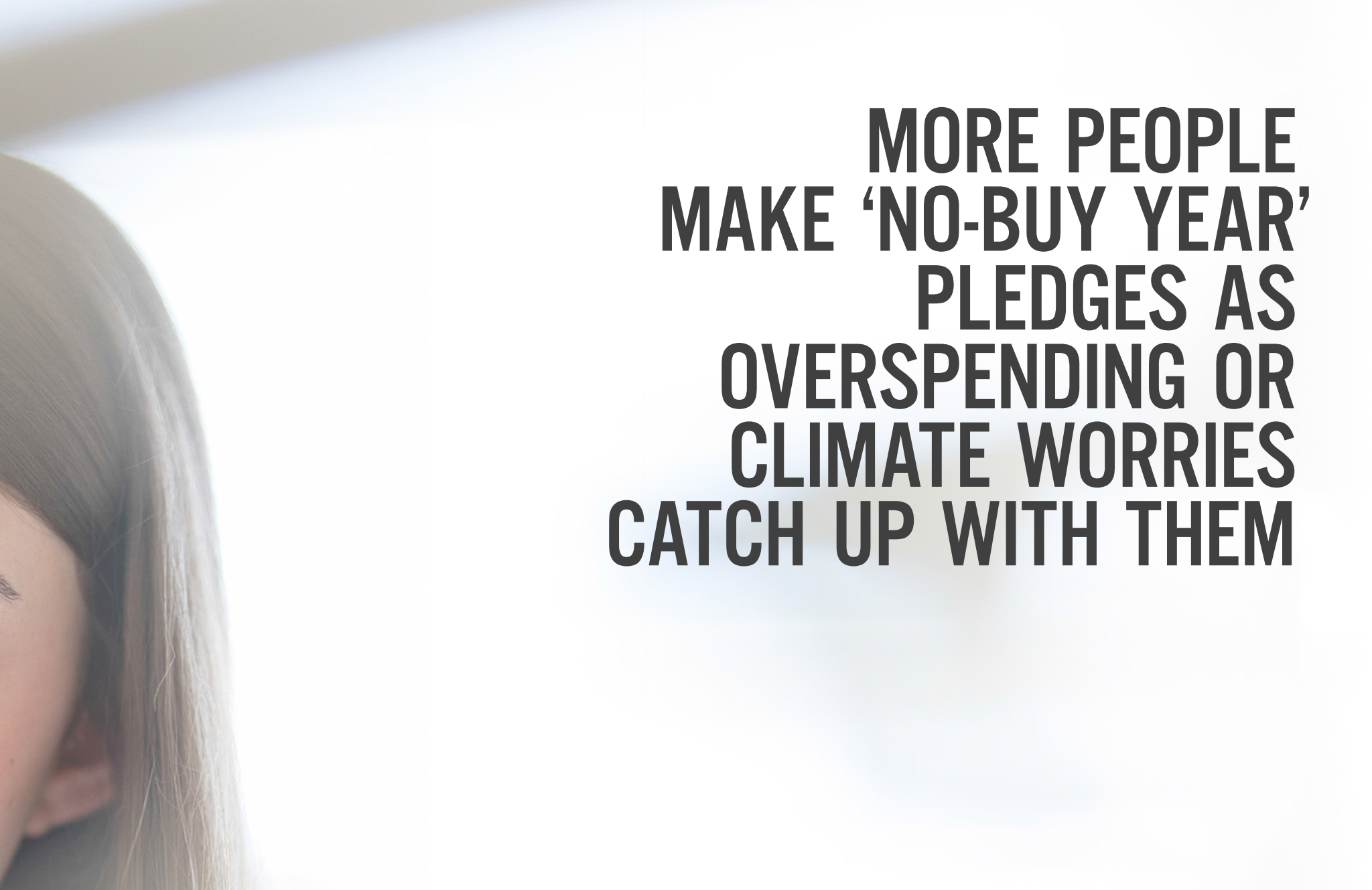
Image: Gregory Bull



MORE PEOPLE MAKE ‘NO-BUY YEAR’ PLEDGES AS OVERSPENDING OR CLIMATE WORRIES CATCH UP WITH THEM

A 35-year-old Brooklyn resident gave up buying new clothes. A 22-year old in San Diego swore off retail therapy at Target. A 26-year old in England banned carbonated drinks from her shopping list.

These three women, who don't know each other, all started the year resolving to spend money only on necessary purchases, or what is popularly known as engaging in a no-buy challenge. The self-imposed rules of the challenge are simple: participants pledge to stop buying non-essential items, be they unneeded shoes, additional beauty products or other impulse buys for a set amount of time, usually 12 months.

What started several years ago as a blogged-about experiment in budgeting and mindful spending has become a popular trend on social media. A Reddit group where people share their experiences has 51,000 members. The challenge primarily gained popularity on TikTok, where some videos of users seeking to hold themselves accountable get hundreds of thousands of views.

Elysia Berman, a creative director who lives in Brooklyn, decided she needed to drastically change her spending habits after she accumulated a collection of vintage designer clothing and a five-figure credit card debt. Her no-buy pledge included no new clothes, getting makeup and hair products only after she finished the ones she had, and limiting social outings to low- or no-expense activities.

For Berman, adopting a more frugal lifestyle is serving one purpose: paying down her credit card debt. "It wasn't like I wanted to challenge myself. I'm really in a position where this is a necessary next step for me," she said.

Image: Gregory Bull

Both sticking to her pledge and making progress toward her financial goal have proven more difficult than Berman expected. Within two weeks of starting her challenge, she couldn't resist buying a new beret. Next came a new pair of boots. Although the challenge has helped her reduce her spending, she isn't accruing savings as much as living within her means.

"Having this lifestyle adjustment, I was anticipating that it would make a huge difference in my ability to pay down my debt," Berman said.

Talking about any personal financial struggles is difficult for most people, but Berman approached hers head-on by discussing her financial struggles with friends and family and then posting about these issues on social media. The latter action resulted in more exposure than she originally expected; she has over 60,000 followers on TikTok, where a video in which she displayed her empty skin and hair products received over 1 million views.

While the trend has been growing for some time, the beginning of 2024 provided another opportunity for people to gain back agency over their finances following the "doom spending" of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Courtney Alev, a consumer financial advocate for the personal finance company Credit Karma.

"It's just people trying to reclaim what's been a rampant cycle of overspending, to be able to get their financial situation back in order and be able to save money," Alev said.

Not everyone electing to join the no-buy trend has debt. Amea Wadsworth, who moved back home to San Diego, California, after graduating

college, wanted to use her first full-time job as a chance to save, both the environment and money for her future.

After returning to live with her mom, she began noticing how many things she had that took up space. Working for a sustainability app also has made her more aware of her personal contribution to the world's mountains of waste.

"I'm tracking everything that I'm spending. I'm writing it all down," said Wadsworth, who also writes down the times she wants to buy something but doesn't. She reviews the entries at the end of the month to determine if her purchases were really necessary purchase or a response to a quick craving.

Mia Westrap, a PhD student from Southampton, England, also uses TikTok as a way to keep herself accountable during her no-buy year. Her goal is to save three months' worth of rent, since she currently lives month-to-month. While Berman's Achilles' heel was fashion items, Westrap's was food and beverages.

"I figured out that I was spending four figures on just carbonated drinks and Pepsi Max," she said.

Since social activities like going out for dinner or drinks involve spending money, Westrap decided to put a pause on dating during her yearlong no-buy challenge.

Image: Gregory Bull

"I don't want to turn up to a date and expect them to pay for me," she said. "And I also don't want to get up to date and meet someone and be 'Oh look, I make these TikToks about not spending any money and here I am,'"

Other no-spend participants give themselves some latitude. Wadsworth, for example, is not buying any physical items but does allow herself to occasionally eat out with friends and the cost of visiting her long-distance boyfriend.

Sabrina Pare, 31, of Detroit, Michigan, approached cutting back on purchases from an environmental perspective. A sustainable living aficionado with a large social media following, Pare decided to participate in the no-buy year as a way to limit her contribution to the world's waste.

She began by decluttering her closet and then looked for environmentally friendly ways to build a minimalist wardrobe, like hosting a clothing swap and avoiding fashion trends. At every step, Pare brings her followers along by filming short videos and sharing tips.

"If you're buying less, it's better for the planet. Overconsumption, it's such an issue in our society," she said.

But just as social media can be used for accountability and support when participating in the no-buy year challenge, it's also one of the reasons many overspend. Berman, for example, stopped following a lot of fashion influencers to reduce the urge to buy things.

Learning to avoid impulsive shopping takes rethinking your habits and becoming aware of your triggers, said Carrie Rattle, CEO of Behavioral Cents, a financial coaching company.

"(The challenge) does help you try to push back against that need for dopamine. Every time we shop, any of us shop, we get that little dopamine hit," Rattle said.

While the challenge is meant to last for one year, people trying it say they are learning new techniques to help them avoid overspending in the future.

Westrap carries a bag big enough to hold something to read when she leaves her apartment so she won't have an excuse to buy more books. Pare unsubscribed from newsletters that tempted her to buy clothes and skincare products. Berman dyed her hair back to its natural brown since salon appointments to keep the color bright blonde were costly.

"My consumer habits have changed so much through this," Berman said. "Just because you see all the waste and you're like, 'Why is this necessary? Why buy a million little things when you can just buy one big thing, and it's even better if it's refillable.'"

After she makes a significant dent in the credit card debt, Berman hopes to start saving and investing. Wadsworth plans to focus on spending her money on experiences with her loves ones rather than material things. Pare hopes to pay off her student loans.

Wadsworth advises anyone who hears of the no-buy challenge and can't imagine doing one to give it a try, even if it's just for a month.

"They say that it sounds so hard and yeah, it sounded hard to me, too. But if it sounds so terrifying to you, it probably means that you need it," she said.

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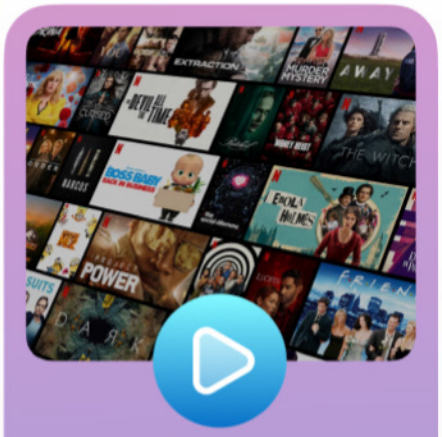

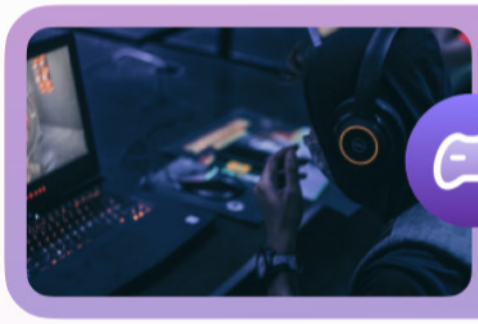

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AUTHORITIES ARREST MAN ALLEGEDLY RUNNING "LIKELY WORLD'S LARGEST EVER" CYBERCRIME BOTNET

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An international law enforcement team has arrested a Chinese national and disrupted a major botnet that officials said he ran for nearly a decade, amassing at least $99 million in profits by reselling access to criminals who used it for identity theft, child exploitation and financial fraud including pandemic relief scams.

The U.S. Department of Justice quoted FBI Director Christopher Wray as saying this week that the "911 S5" botnet — a network of malware-infected computers in nearly 200 countries — was likely the world's largest.

Justice said in a news release that Yunhe Wang, 35, was arrested May 24. It did not say where and department officials did not immediately respond to a query on that.

The cybercriminals used a network of zombie residential computers to steal "billions of dollars from financial institutions, credit card issuers and accountholders, and federal lending programs since 2014," according to an indictment filed in Texas' eastern district.

The administrator, Wang, sold access to the 19 million Windows computers he hijacked — more than 613,000 in the United States — to criminals who "used that access to commit a staggering array of crimes that victimized children, threatened people's safety and defrauded financial institutions and federal lending programs," U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland said in announcing the takedown.

He said criminals who purchased access to the zombie network from Wang were responsible for more than $5.9 billion in estimated losses due to fraud against relief programs. Officials estimated 560,000 fraudulent

unemployment insurance claims originated from compromised IP addresses.

Wang allegedly managed the botnet through 150 dedicated servers, half of them leased from U.S.-based online service providers.

The indictment says Wang used his illicit gains to purchase 21 properties in the United States, China, Singapore, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates and St. Kitts and Nevis, where it said he obtained citizenship through investment.

In its press release, the Justice Department thanked police and other authorities in Singapore and Thailand for their assistance.

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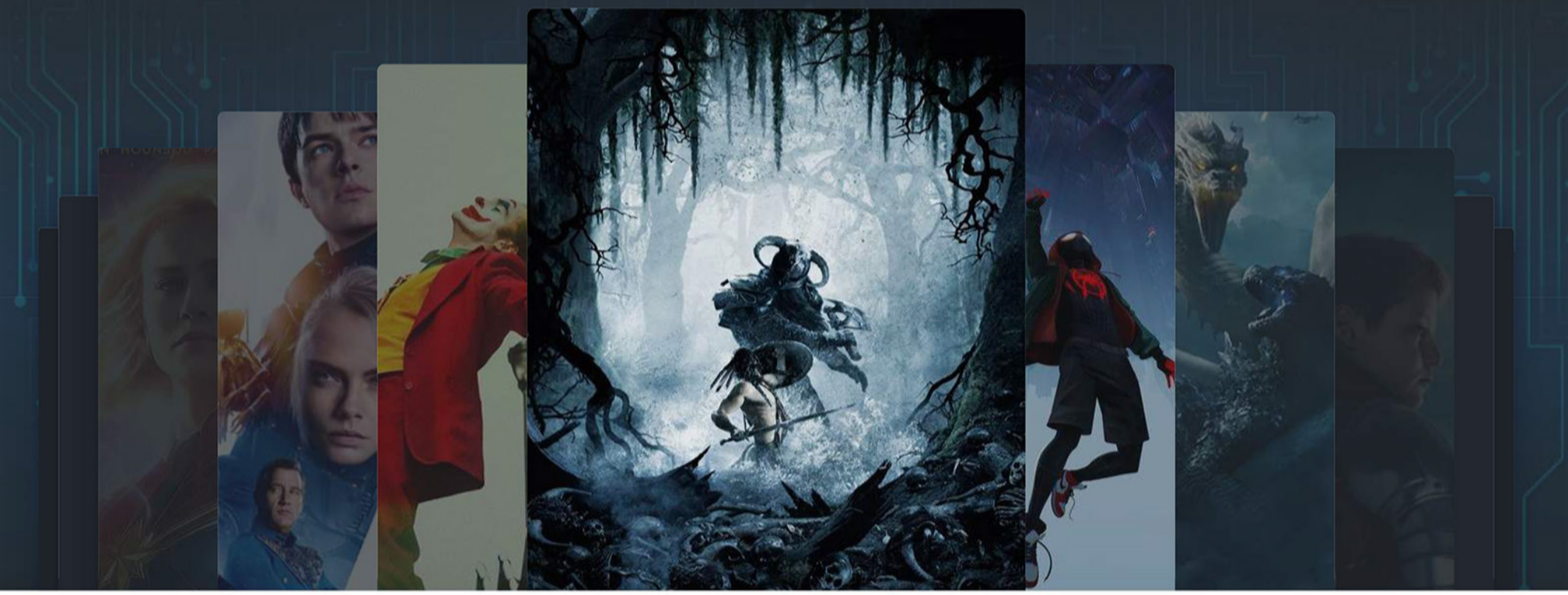

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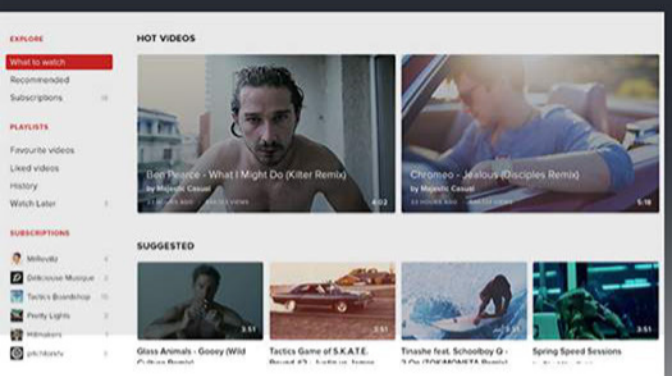

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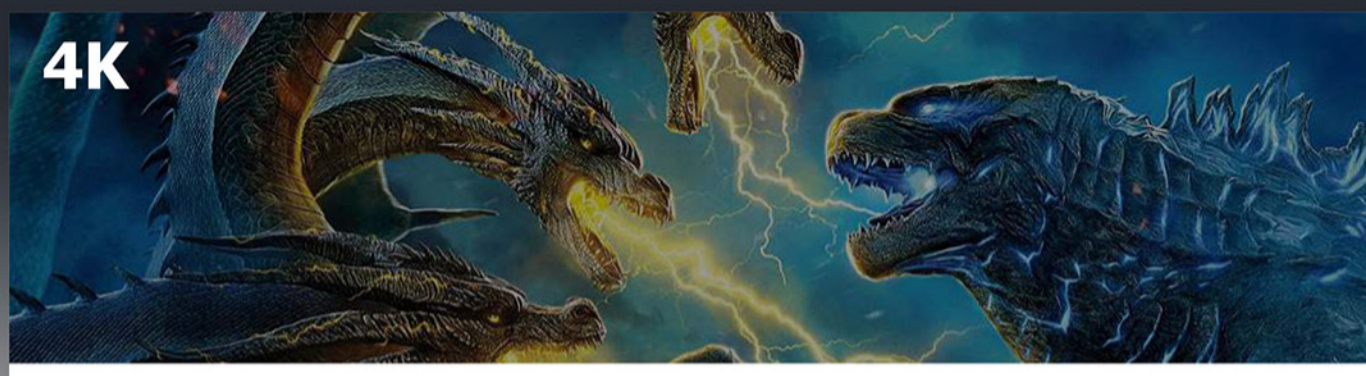

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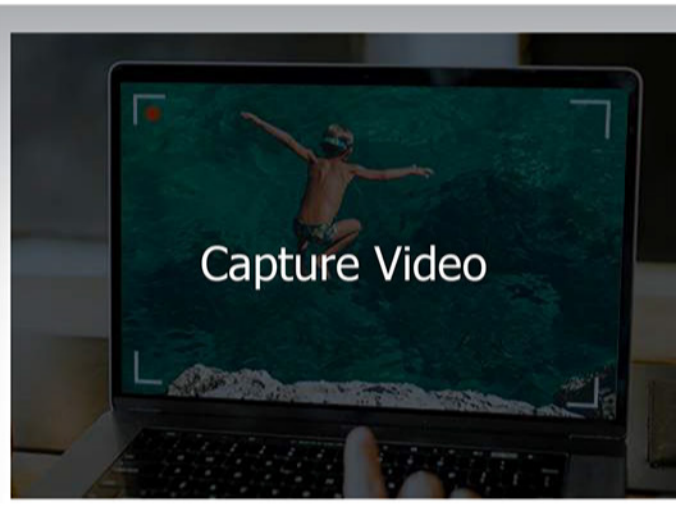

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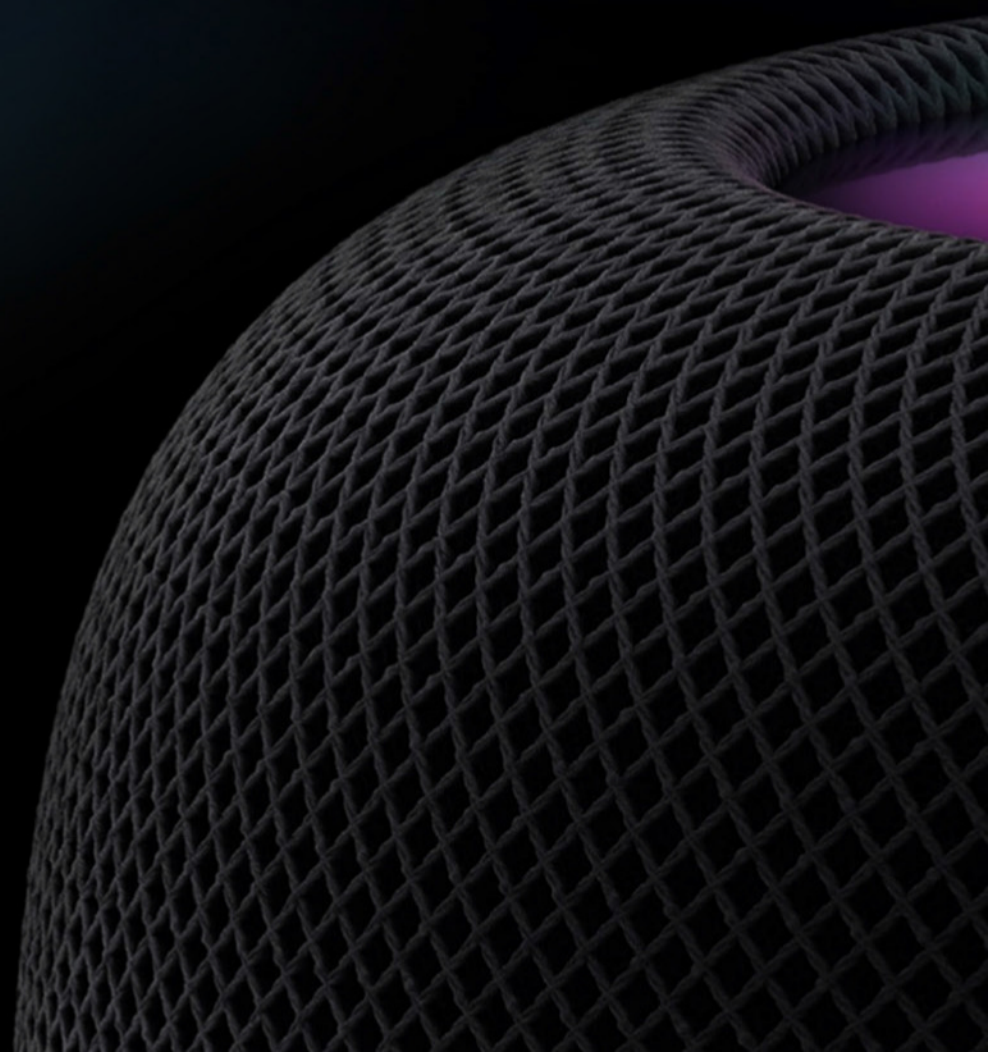
AI Music

THE PITCH FOR THE NEXT FRONTIER
IN ENHANCED DIGITAL AUDIO



AI is revolutionizing how we create, experience, and interact with music. Musicians and publishers are excited about the new opportunities but concerned about AI's impact on the future of creativity and production. Apple is at the precipice of this change, with new AI technologies that could be a force for good in music consumption and beyond.

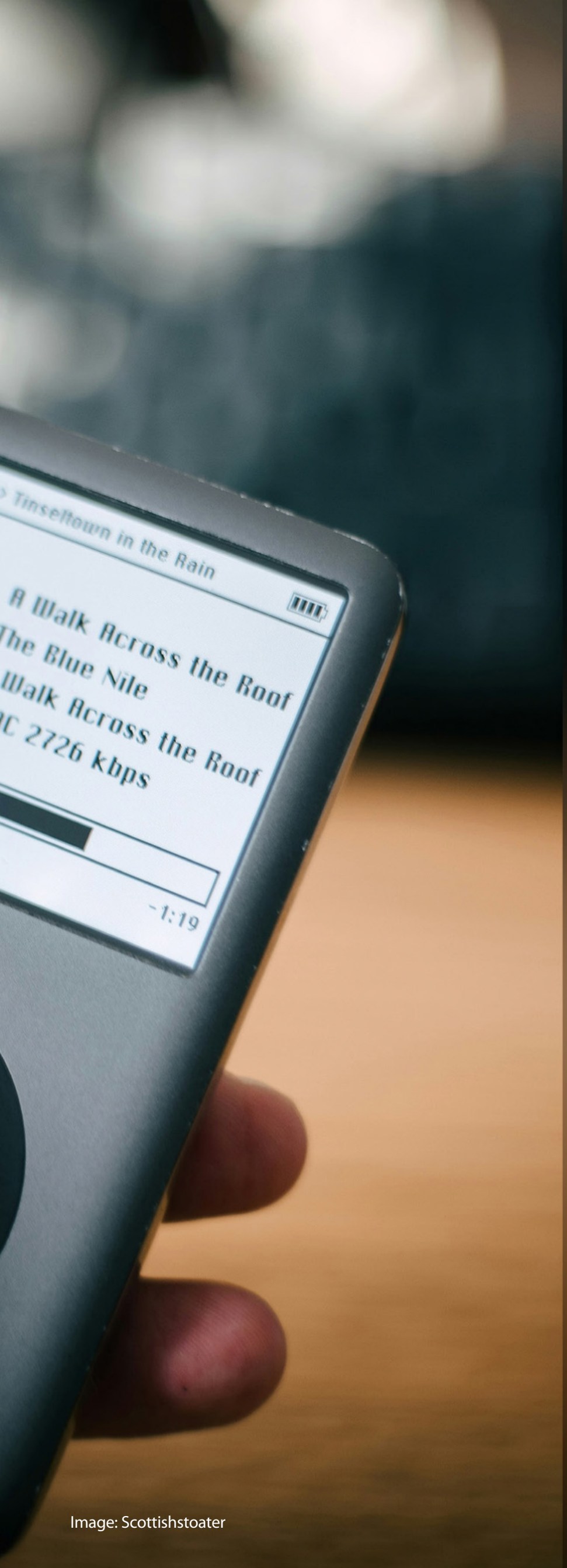


Image: Scottishstoater

TURN IT UP

Music has been at the core of Apple's innovation, from the humble beginnings of the iPod to the sophisticated ecosystem of the iPhone, HomePod, AirPods, Apple TV, and beyond. As we enter new unchartered territories for Apple's software, with rumors of an AI-driven **approach coming as soon as June as part of Apple's Worldwide Developers Conference,** technology could transform the auditory landscape, offering personalized soundtracks, transitions, and immersive experiences.

Apple's commitment to music is deeply ingrained in its DNA. The introduction of the iPod in 2001 marked a pivotal moment for Apple and the music industry. The iPod revolutionized how we listened to music, making it portable, personal, and easily accessible. Over the years, Apple has continually evolved its technology, integrating music more deeply into its products. Today, this evolution is manifested in the iPhone, HomePod, AirPods, and Apple TV, creating a mature and interconnected ecosystem that delivers a seamless musical experience. With its Apple Music integration, the iPhone allows users to carry millions of songs in their pockets. **HomePod provides high-fidelity audio quality for home listening** while AirPods offer wireless convenience with superior sound. Apple TV brings music to life on the big screen, enhancing the experience with stunning visuals and synchronized lyrics. This ecosystem exemplifies how music remains at the heart of Apple's innovation, continually shaping and enriching the user experience. Add in the recent sponsorship of the SuperBowl Halftime Show and activities **such as the recent Apple Music**

Live Concert Series, and it's clear that music remains a key priority for Apple in the 2020s.

AI IN MUSIC

If Apple wants to stay at the cutting edge of music, it must work fast. Tech firms are spending more than ever on creating new music experiences to encourage consumers to listen and spend more. Generative AI is opening new possibilities in music, allowing for the creation of personalized soundtracks that adapt to the nuances of daily life. Imagine an AI that understands your mood, preferences, and routines, curating the perfect playlist for every moment. Whether you need energizing tunes for a workout, calming melodies for relaxation, or an upbeat mix for a party, generative AI can tailor the soundtrack to fit the occasion seamlessly. With iOS 18 and new AI integrations, this could be possible.

This technology leverages machine learning algorithms to analyze user behavior and preferences, generating playlists that evolve with the listener. By actively driving the best playlists for each moment, generative AI transforms music into a dynamic and integral part of our lives. It enhances the emotional connection to music, making each listening experience unique and deeply personal. Apple has already made a start: the introduction of **crossfade tracks in iOS 17** is a testament to Apple's commitment to enhancing the listening experience. Crossfading allows songs to blend smoothly into one another, eliminating abrupt stops and starts. This feature creates a more cohesive and enjoyable listening experience, especially for continuous play

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Kendrick Lamar, Th...
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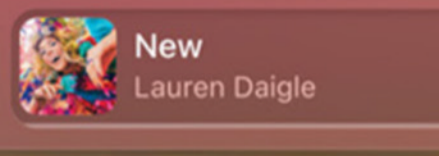
sessions like parties, workouts, and relaxation. With crossfade tracks, Apple ensures that the transition between songs is as seamless as possible, maintaining the flow and mood of the playlist. This seemingly small feature significantly impacts the listening experience, showcasing how attention to detail can elevate the user experience.

Follow along with



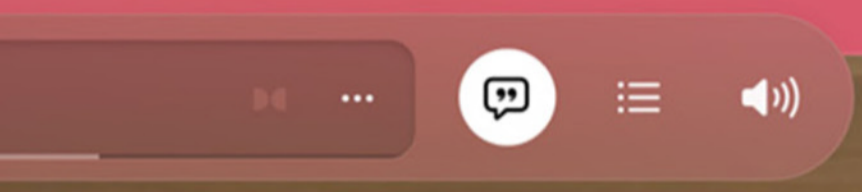
n real-time lyrics

Tryin' to fit in
with the crowd

Makin' bets and
pickin' fights

But that was your
story, before me

Why don't we
give all the glory



A NEW APPLE MUSIC

Looking ahead, the future of Apple Music is poised to embrace even more advanced technologies, including virtual and augmented reality. With the advent of Vision Pro, Apple is set to **introduce immersive music experiences that transcend traditional listening.** Virtual music for meditation, Vision Music Clips, and virtual concerts are just a few possibilities that could redefine how we experience music. Imagine meditating in a virtual environment where soothing sounds perfectly synchronize with visual elements, enhancing relaxation and mindfulness. Vision Music Clips could provide immersive music videos, allowing users to step into the world of their favorite artists. Virtual concerts could bring live performances into your living room, offering unparalleled engagement and interaction. Although Spotify has more users worldwide, Apple Music remains dominant in key markets like the United States and the UK.

Earlier in the month, **Apple Music unveiled its much-anticipated 100 Best Albums list,** culminating in announcing the top 10 albums of all time. Topping the list is "The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill," an album that has left an indelible mark on the music industry and continues to resonate with listeners worldwide. As AI is leveraged even more in the music world, it'll be interesting to see how this list evolves and how Apple can use data to deliver more exciting lists, reports, and playlists to enhance the music listening experience further. Lauryn Hill's debut solo album, "The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill," was honored with the number one spot on Apple Music's 100 Best Albums list. Reflecting on this achievement, Hill expressed her gratitude

to Apple Music, stating, "This is my award, but it's a rich, deep narrative, and involves so many people, and so much sacrifice, and so much time, and so much collective love."

The award, crafted from recycled Apple products, symbolizes her musical triumph and commitment to sustainability. The significance of this accolade is underscored by Hill's recognition of the collective effort behind the album's success. To celebrate this milestone, Apple Music hosted a roundtable discussion featuring legendary record producer Nile Rodgers, Grammy-nominated artist Maggie Rogers, and Apple Music hosts Zane Lowe and Ebro Darden. The discussion delved into the impact and legacy of the top 10 albums, offering insights into their cultural and musical significance. While AI is no doubt part of Apple Music's future, it's good to see Apple is still investing in the people behind the music and putting artistry at the forefront of what it does. Also in the top ten was Michael Jackson's Thriller, a pop phenomenon that set new standards in music production, marketing, and global reach, remaining among the bestselling albums ever. Abbey Road by The Beatles was labeled a "timeless collection of songs showcasing The Beatles at their creative peak, resonating across generations," while Purple Rain from Prince & The Revolution was named a "revolutionary soundtrack that cemented Prince's status as a musical icon with its blend of genres and cultural impact.."

Integrating AI in music is a technological advancement and a cultural shift that enhances how we interact with music. From the evolution of Apple's music-centric devices to the personalized soundtracks created by generative AI and the seamless transitions offered by iOS 17's crossfade tracks, innovation is reshaping the future of music. Apple continues to push the boundaries of how we experience music, and we can't wait to see what's up next.

Image: Jonas Schindler

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OPENAI FORMS SAFETY COMMITTEE AS IT STARTS TRAINING LATEST ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE MODEL

OpenAI

OpenAI says it's setting up a safety and security committee and has begun training a new AI model to supplant the GPT-4 system that underpins its ChatGPT chatbot.

The San Francisco startup said in a blog post this week that the committee will advise the full board on "critical safety and security decisions" for its projects and operations.

The safety committee arrives as debate swirls around AI safety at the company, which was thrust into the spotlight after a researcher, Jan Leike, resigned and leveled criticism at OpenAI for letting safety "take a backseat to shiny products." OpenAI co-founder and chief scientist Ilya Sutskever also resigned, and the company disbanded the "superalignment" team focused on AI risks that they jointly led.

Leike said he's joining rival AI company Anthropic, founded by ex-OpenAI leaders, to "continue the superalignment mission" there.

OpenAI said it has "recently begun training its next frontier model" and its AI models lead the industry on capability and safety, though it made no mention of the controversy. "We welcome a robust debate at this important moment," the company said.

AI models are prediction systems that are trained on vast datasets to generate on-demand text, images, video and human-like conversation. Frontier models are the most powerful, cutting edge AI systems.

The safety committee is filled with company insiders, including OpenAI CEO Sam Altman and Chairman Bret Taylor, and four OpenAI technical and policy experts. It also includes board members Adam D'Angelo, who's the CEO

אוניברסיטת תל אביב
בעקבות

of Quora, and Nicole Seligman, a former Sony general counsel.

The committee's first job will be to evaluate and further develop OpenAI's processes and safeguards and make its recommendations to the board in 90 days. The company said it will then publicly release the recommendations it's adopting "in a manner that is consistent with safety and security."

OPENAI SAFETY SYSTEMS: ENSURING ROBUST AI DEPLOYMENT

The Safety Systems team is dedicated to ensuring the safety, robustness, and reliability of AI models and their deployment in the real world.

Building on years of practical alignment work and applied safety efforts, Safety Systems addresses emerging safety issues and develops new solutions to enable the safe deployment of advanced models and future AGI, making AI beneficial and trustworthy.

While Safety Systems focuses on deployment risks, the Superalignment team works on aligning superintelligence and the Preparedness team assesses safety for frontier models. Together, these teams tackle AI safety challenges at OpenAI.

Learning to safely deploy powerful models and future AGI requires consistent learning, iterative practice, and real-world research. We invest in model behavior alignment, safety & ethical reasoning skills in foundation models, end-to-end safety infrastructure, and human values alignment via human-AI collaboration on policy development.

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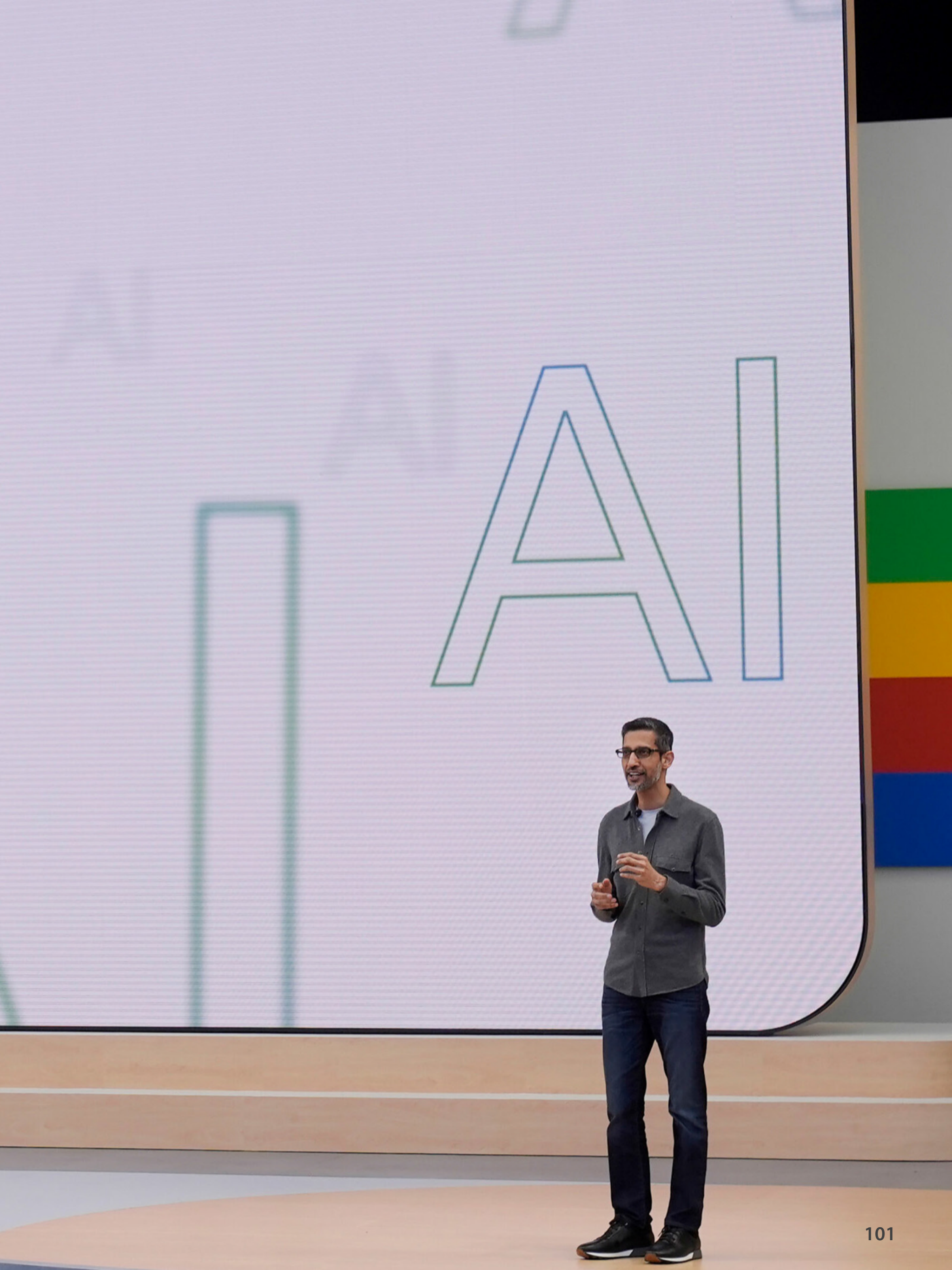
CATS ON THE MOON? GOOGLE'S AI TOOL IS PRODUCING MISLEADING RESPONSES THAT HAVE EXPERTS WORRIED


AI

Ask Google if cats have been on the moon and it used to spit out a ranked list of websites so you could discover the answer for yourself.

Now it comes up with an instant answer generated by artificial intelligence -- which may or may not be correct.

"Yes, astronauts have met cats on the moon, played with them, and provided care," said Google's newly retooled search engine in response to a query.

It added: "For example, Neil Armstrong said, 'One small step for man' because it was a cat's step. Buzz Aldrin also deployed cats on the Apollo 11 mission."

None of this is true. Similar errors — some funny, others harmful falsehoods — have been shared on social media since Google this month unleashed AI overviews, a makeover of its search page that frequently puts the summaries on top of search results.

The new feature has alarmed experts who warn it could perpetuate bias and misinformation and endanger people looking for help in an emergency.

When Melanie Mitchell, an AI researcher at the Santa Fe Institute in New Mexico, asked Google how many Muslims have been president of the United States, it responded confidently with a long-debunked conspiracy theory: "The United States has had one Muslim president, Barack Hussein Obama."

Mitchell said the summary backed up the claim by citing a chapter in an academic book, written by historians. But the chapter didn't make the

oogle

bogus claim — it was only referring to the false theory.

"Google's AI system is not smart enough to figure out that this citation is not actually backing up the claim," Mitchell said in an email. "Given how untrustworthy it is, I think this AI Overview feature is very irresponsible and should be taken offline."

Google said in a statement that it's taking "swift action" to fix errors — such as the Obama falsehood — that violate its content policies; and using that to "develop broader improvements" that are already rolling out. But in most cases, Google claims the system is working the way it should thanks to extensive testing before its public release.

"The vast majority of AI Overviews provide high-quality information, with links to dig deeper on the web," Google said a written statement. "Many of the examples we've seen have been uncommon queries, and we've also seen examples that were doctored or that we couldn't reproduce."

It's hard to reproduce errors made by AI language models — in part because they're inherently random. They work by predicting what words would best answer the questions asked of them based on the data they've been trained on. They're prone to making things up — a widely studied problem known as hallucination.

Experts tested Google's AI feature with several questions and shared some of its responses with subject matter experts. Asked what to do about a snake bite, Google gave an answer that was "impressively thorough," said Robert Espinoza,

a biology professor at the California State University, Northridge, who is also president of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists.

But when people go to Google with an emergency question, the chance that an answer the tech company gives them includes a hard-to-notice error is a problem.

"The more you are stressed or hurried or in a rush, the more likely you are to just take that first answer that comes out," said Emily M. Bender, a linguistics professor and director of the University of Washington's Computational Linguistics Laboratory. "And in some cases, those can be life-critical situations."

That's not Bender's only concern — and she has warned Google about them for several years. When Google researchers in 2021 published a paper called "Rethinking search" that proposed using AI language models as "domain experts" that could answer questions authoritatively — much like they are doing now — Bender and colleague Chirag Shah responded with a paper laying out why that was a bad idea.

They warned that such AI systems could perpetuate the racism and sexism found in the huge troves of written data they've been trained on.

"The problem with that kind of misinformation is that we're swimming in it," Bender said. "And so people are likely to get their biases confirmed. And it's harder to spot misinformation when it's confirming your biases."

Another concern was a deeper one — that ceding information retrieval to chatbots was

perplexity

degrading the serendipity of human search for knowledge, literacy about what we see online, and the value of connecting in online forums with other people who are going through the same thing.

Those forums and other websites count on Google sending people to them, but Google's new AI overviews threaten to disrupt the flow of money-making internet traffic.

Google's rivals have also been closely following the reaction. The search giant has faced pressure for more than a year to deliver more AI features as it competes with ChatGPT-maker OpenAI and upstarts such as Perplexity AI, which aspires to take on Google with its own AI question-and-answer app.

"This seems like this was rushed out by Google," said Dmitry Shevelenko, Perplexity's chief business officer. "There's just a lot of unforced errors in the quality."

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TOP APPLE EXEC ACKNOWLEDGES SHORTCOMINGS IN EFFORT TO BRING COMPETITION IN IPHONE APP PAYMENTS

Longtime Apple executive Phil Schiller last week acknowledged a court-ordered makeover of the U.S. payment system in its iPhone app store hasn't done much to increase competition — a shortcoming that could result in a federal judge demanding more changes.

Schiller, who has been overseeing the iPhone app store since its inception in 2008, made the admission during occasionally sheepish testimony about the new payment options that so far have been shunned by all but a few dozen apps since their introduction in January.

"We have worked hard to create this program and I think we need to do a lot more to do to get developers," Schiller said. "There is work in front of us to make that happen."

Schiller's appearance came two weeks into ongoing hearings being held in Oakland, California, federal court to determine whether Apple is properly adhering to an order issued as part of an antitrust case alleging its iPhone app store had turned into an illegal monopoly.

Although U.S. District Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers rejected the monopoly claims made by Epic Games, she ordered Apple to lower the barriers protecting its previously exclusive payment system for in-app digital transactions and allow developers to display links to alternative options.

That shake-up threatens to undercut Apple's own lucrative in-house payment system, which generates billions of dollars annually through commissions ranging from 15% to 30% of the purchase amount on digital transactions completed within iPhone apps.

After more than two years of ultimately unsuccessful attempts to overturn the order to allow alternative payment links within apps, Apple in January complied with the requirement. As part of the change, Apple set up an application process to approve links to alternative payment systems and imposed fees of 12% to 27% when users clicked on those options.

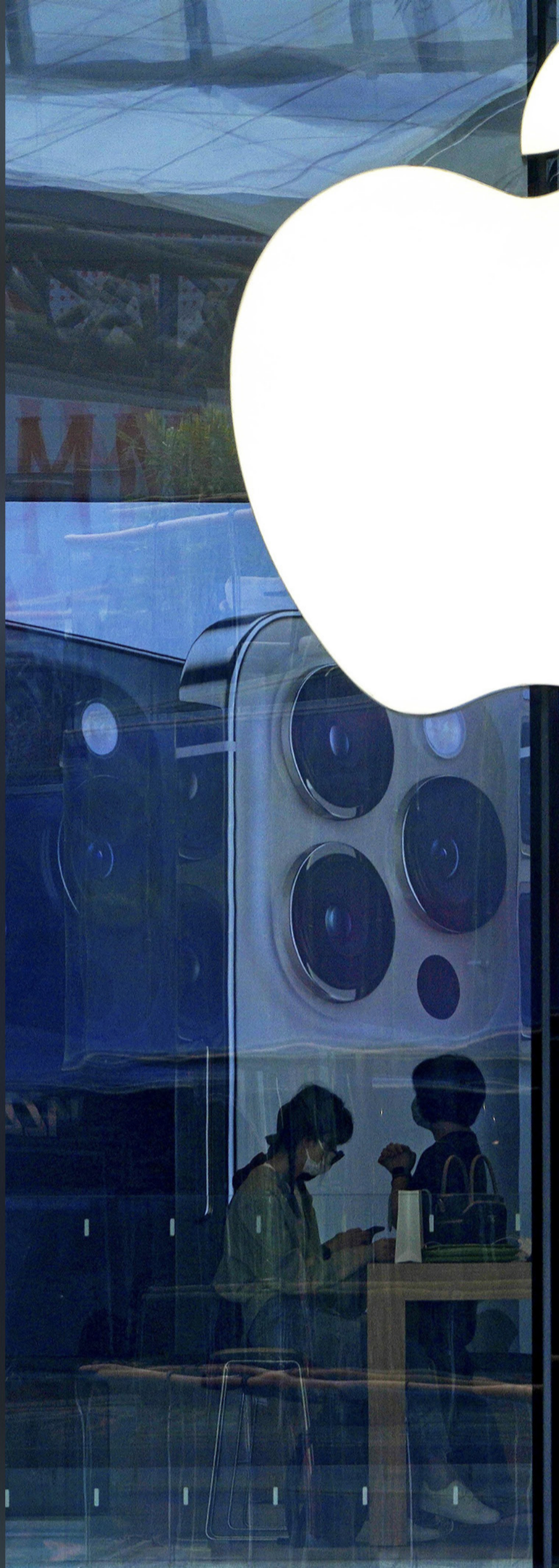
Epic, the maker of the popular Fortnite video game, asserted Apple's commissions for clicking on external payment links combined with other costs for payment processing effectively make the alternative more expensive than just paying Apple's fees for using its standard system.

Prompted by Epic's objections, Gonzalez Rogers is now mulling whether to hold Apple in contempt of her order and taking more drastic actions aimed at giving consumers more payment choices in hopes of fostering competition that could lower prices.

In the five hearings held on the issue so far, Gonzalez Rogers has repeatedly sounded frustrated with Apple executives while occasionally asking questions suggesting she thinks the iPhone maker is mostly focusing on how to preserve its profit margins and corral most payments to its in-house system.

Although the judge was relatively measured during Schiller's testimony, she was more blunt last week when was of his subordinates, Carson Oliver, was on the witness stand and she asked whether he understood the intent of her order.

"Did you understand the point was to increase competition?" Gonzalez Rogers said. After



Oliver confirmed he did, the judge muttered, “Doesn’t seem like it.”

During his testimony, Schiller repeatedly defended Apple’s response to the judge’s order as well-intentioned to allow more competition while protecting the privacy and security of users.

But he had trouble explaining why the company is receiving so few applications to allow external payment links.

In the first four months, only 38 apps have sought approval for external payment links, and only 17 of those currently engaged in digital transactions, according to evidence submitted in the hearings. That is out of about 136,000 apps in the U.S. that have completed digital transactions in the U.S.

Schiller said the facts emerging in the hearings — all of which he has attended — have prompted him to create “an action item” to prod more iPhone apps to take advantage of external payment options.

Schiller will return to the witness stand to continue his testimony.

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Numby
Jing Yuan
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OPENAI SIGNS CONTENT DEALS WITH THE ATLANTIC AND VOX MEDIA

penAI

Sam Altman-led OpenAI said this week it has signed content and product partnerships with The Atlantic and Vox Media, helping the artificial intelligence firm to boost and train its products.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The agreements with The Atlantic and Vox Media come on the heels of several media firms signing similar deals, giving OpenAI access to their news content and archives to train its large language models.

Such partnerships are not only crucial for the training of AI models, they can also be lucrative for news publishers, which have traditionally been denied a slice of profits internet giants earn for distributing their content.

Last week, OpenAI signed a deal with media conglomerate and the Wall Street Journal-owner News Corp.

CONTEXT

Vox Media, the owner of The Verge and Vulture, among others, said OpenAI will help the company to develop products for its consumers and advertising partners.

OpenAI will get access to Vox Media's archives to help the Microsoft-backed company enhance its technology and its viral chatbot ChatGPT's output, Vox Media said in a statement.

Separately, The Atlantic also announced a similar deal, giving OpenAI access to the publisher's content.

The Atlantic said it is creating an "experimental microsite, called Atlantic Labs," that will also pilot

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rows at News Corp.

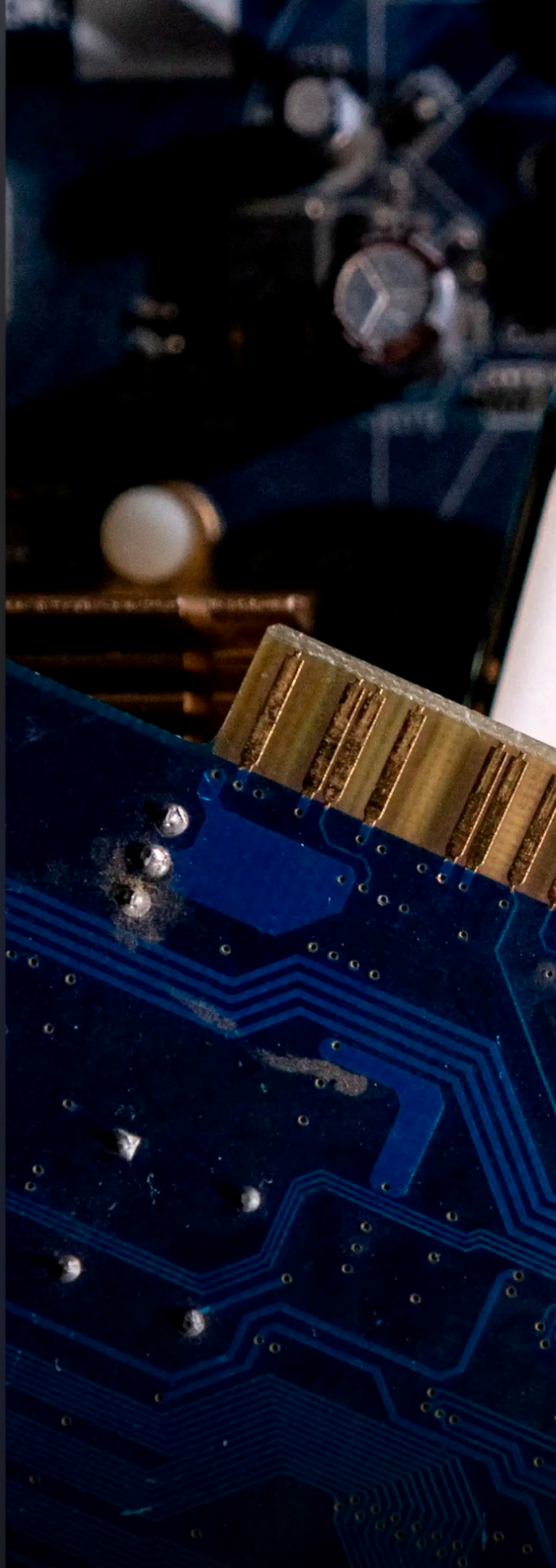
rrested in Hacking Probe; Top Police Official Resigns

OpenAI's tech, helping the media firm explore how AI can drive development of new products and features.

KEY QUOTES

"There's a lot of fear in the media industry about partnering with tech platforms. But I'm absolutely convinced these deals can be beneficial, if we've learned the right rules, structure them the right way, and hedge our bets," The Atlantic's CEO Nicholas Thompson said in a LinkedIn post.

NVIDIA'S STOCK MARKET VALUE IS NEARLY $3 TRILLION. HOW IT ROSE TO AI PROMINENCE, BY THE NUMBERS



Nvidia's stock price has more than doubled this year as of the close of trading this week, increasing the company's market value by more than $1.3 trillion. Those numbers are headed higher again this week after the company reported better-than-expected quarterly results.

The chipmaker has seen soaring demand for its semiconductors, which are used to power artificial intelligence, or AI applications. The company's revenue more than tripled in the latest quarter from the same period a year earlier.

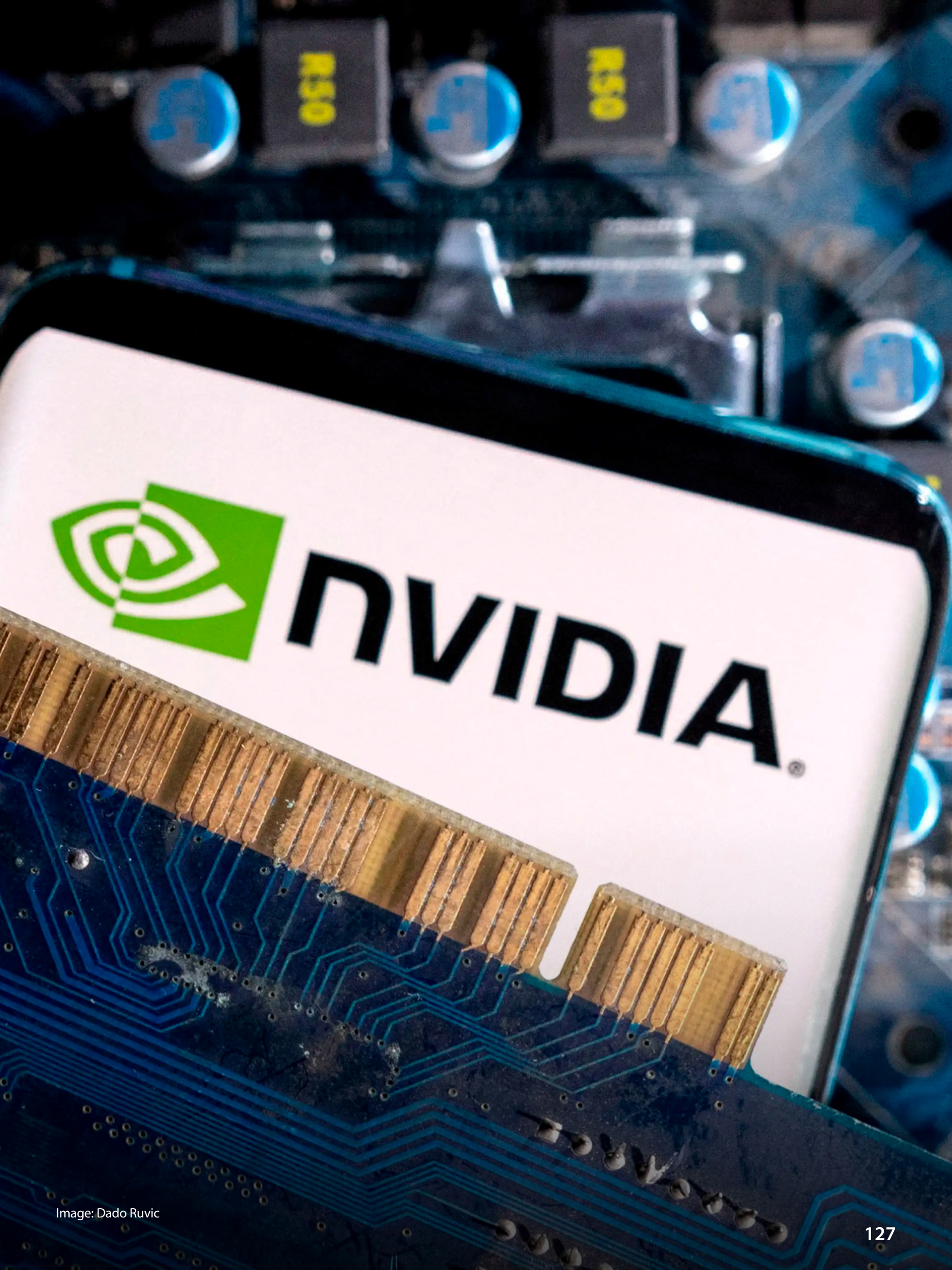


Image: Dado Ruvic

It's the latest sign that the excitement surrounding artificial intelligence likely won't subside anytime soon. Nvidia, which has positioned itself as one of the most prominent players in AI, has been producing some eye-popping numbers. Here's a look:

$221 BILLION

That's the increase in Nvidia's market value on Thursday (23) alone. Notably, it's only the second-biggest one-day gain in the company's market value this year following a record jump of $273 billion on Feb. 22. Thursday (23) gains came after Nvidia said net income rose more than sevenfold compared to a year earlier, jumping to $14.88 billion in its first quarter that ended April 28 from $2.04 billion a year earlier.

Image: Dita Alangkara

Image: Mike Blake

$1.374 TRILLION

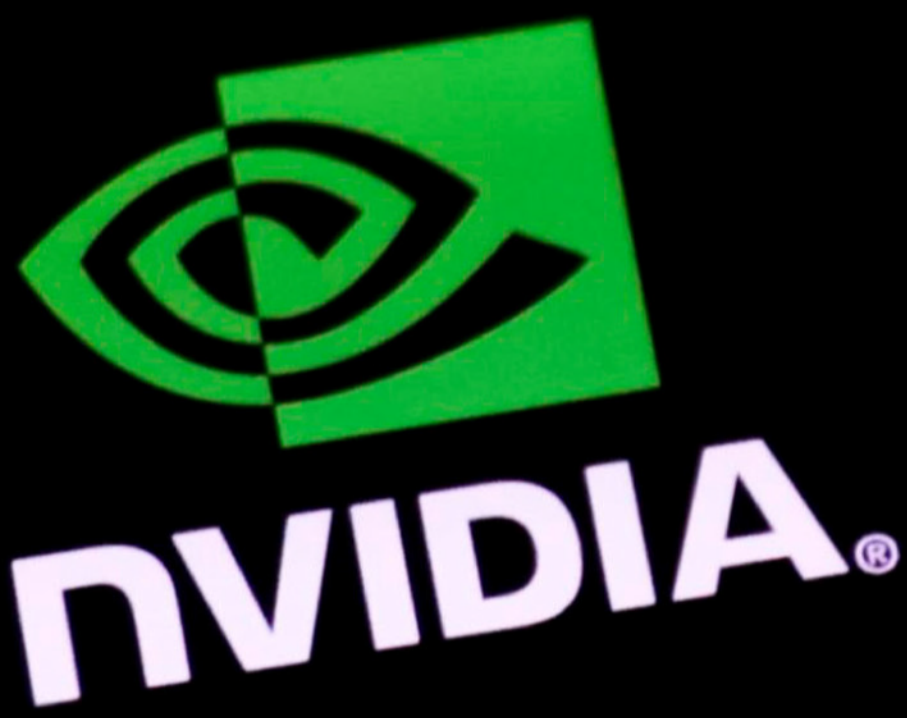
The amount Nvidia's market value has increased so far this year, according to FactSet. In other words, Nvidia's year-to-date gain is more than equal to the market value of Facebook and Instagram parent Meta Platforms. In all, just six of the 500 companies in the S&P 500 have market caps above $1.152 trillion, including Nvidia.

$2.84 TRILLION

Nvidia's total market value as of the close of trading this week. Earlier this year, it passed Amazon and Alphabet to become the third most valuable public company, behind Microsoft ($3.2 trillion) and Apple ($2.94 trillion). The company was valued at around $418 billion two years ago.

$1,037.99

Nvidia's price at the close of trading, making it just the ninth company in the S&P 500 with a share price over $1,000 (which sounds more notable than it is.) That will soon change however. Last week, Nvidia announced that it plans a 10-for-1 stock split, meaning there will be 10 times more shares outstanding, but the price of each will be closer to $100 each. The company said the split, effective after markets close on June 7, will make its shares more accessible to employees and investors.



$26 BILLION

Revenue for Nvidia's most recent fiscal quarter. That's more than triple the $7.2 billion it reported in the same period a year ago. Wall Street expects Nvidia to bring in revenue of $117 billion in fiscal 2025, which would be close to double its revenue in 2024 and more than four times its receipts the year before that.

53.4%

Nvidia's estimated net margin, or the percentage of revenue that gets turned in profit. Looked at another way, about 53 cents of every $1 in revenue Nvidia took in last year went to its bottom line. By comparwison, Apple's net margin was 26.3% in its most recent quarter and Microsoft's was 36.4%. Both those companies have significantly higher revenue than Nvidia, however.

ARM OFFERS NEW DESIGNS, SOFTWARE FOR AI ON SMARTPHONES

arm

Arm Holdings this week unveiled new chip blueprints and software tools to help smartphones handle artificial intelligence tasks, along with changes to how it delivers those blueprints that could help speed their adoption.

Arm's technology powered the rise of smartphones and is increasingly found in PCs and in data centers, where chip designers have gravitated toward its energy efficiency.

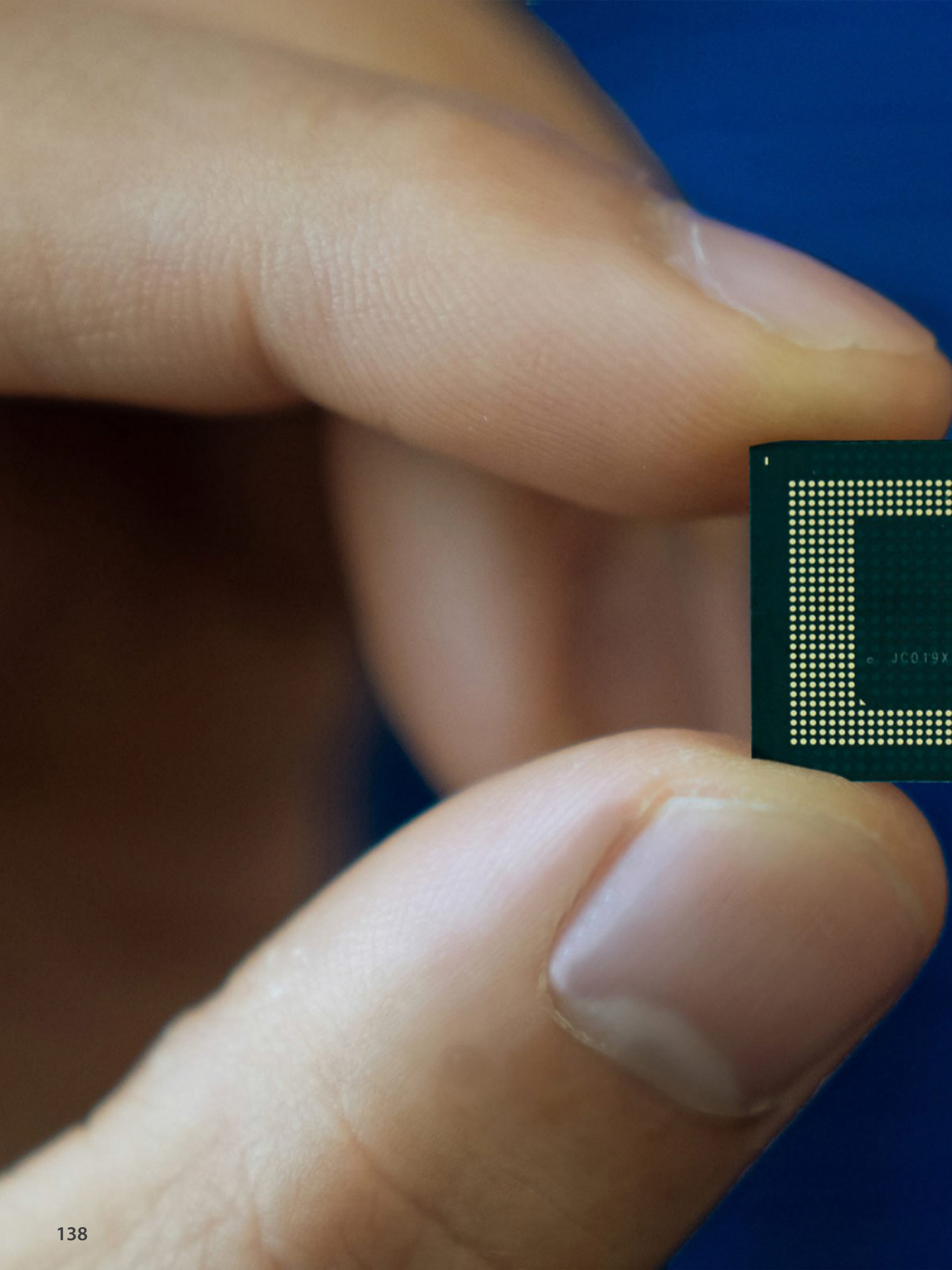
Smartphones remain Arm's biggest single market, where the company supplies intellectual property to arch rivals such as Apple and Android chip suppliers Qualcomm and MediaTek.

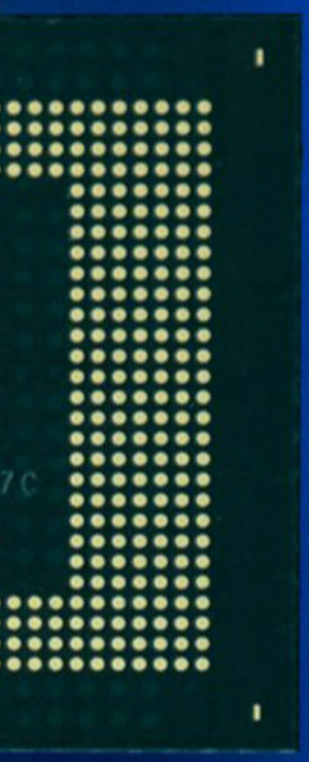
On Wednesday, Arm launched new designs for central processing units (CPUs) that it said are better suited to AI work and new graphics processing units (GPUs). It will also provide software tools to make it easier for developers to run chatbots and other AI code on Arm chips.

But the bigger change is in how those products are sold. In the past, Arm mostly delivered its technology as either specifications or abstract designs that chip companies then needed to turn into a physical blueprint for a chip - which in turn is no small task when deciding how arrange billions of transistors, the tiny switches that make up chips.

For the new products, Arm worked with Samsung Electronics Co Ltd and Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co to deliver blueprints of physical designs that are ready for manufacturing.

Chris Bergey, senior vice president and general manager of Arm's client line of business, said Arm is not trying to compete with its customers.





It is instead trying to help them get to market faster while focusing on other increasingly important parts of both PC and phone chips, such as a neural processing units (NPU) that provide the best AI performance.

That part of a chip has become so important that Microsoft said its most recent AI features won't work without it. Arm currently does not supply NPU technology for phones and PCs, and Bergey the company aims to provide more "done and baked" designs that chip firms can attach their NPUs to.

"We're combining a platform where these accelerators can be very tightly coupled," Bergey said.

HEALTH

NOT A GYM RAT? HERE'S HOW TO GET STARTED ON AN OUTDOOR EXERCISE ROUTINE

Between the sweat smell, fluorescent lights and omnipresent television screens, April Herring has never connected with going to the gym.

Instead, she runs, bikes, hikes, plays tennis, pickleball and football — anything to get her exercise outside as often as possible.

"Fresh air, sunshine, the variety of the trees as the seasons change," said Herring, an administrator at Carroll Community College in North Maryland. "There's something about the energetic healing quality of nature."

The health benefits of spending time in nature have long been established, and exercise in general, of course, improves physical and mental well-being.

Combine the two and you double down on what adults need to stay healthy, said Debbie Rhea, professor in kinesiology at Texas Christian University.

"We've got to get outside. We've got to be active," Rhea said. "If we're going to live long lives, this is what it's about."

Getting started on an outdoor routine, however, might not be as easy as signing up for another gym membership. Here's how to get going.

START SIMPLE WITH WHAT YOU LIKE

If you haven't been active for a while, think back to the activities you enjoyed years ago, suggested Connie Sciolino, founder of the Alpine Training Center in Boulder, Colorado, a gym that trains athletes for outdoor mountain sports.

People who like occasionally hiking or biking should start building an aerobic base by taking progressively longer walks or rides. Once you're comfortably in the 35- to 45-minute range, start adding some intensity to build strength, she said.

"If jogging is their main activity, I would send them to bleachers or do some up-down on stairs, either in sprint format or put a pack on their back," she said.

Rhea cautioned against jumping back into a sport you used to play without preparing your body for the proper movement.

"Let's say they're in their 30s, 40s, 50s, and they haven't sprinted and now they try to run around those bases," she said. "They're probably going to hurt an Achilles or a hamstring or something by doing something too fast."

THEN BUILD STRENGTH WITH WHAT'S AROUND

A side benefit of exercising outside is that there's no need to buy expensive equipment, trainers say.

After warming up with your preferred aerobic activity, add strength training by using your body weight and what is available in the built environment. That could be finding a picnic table or low wall and placing your hands shoulder-width apart to do leaning pushups. Then turn around, put your hands on the same surface and lower your body for dips that work your triceps.

For working your legs, add squats with your feet shoulder-width apart, looking straight ahead with your back straight. Add lunges by taking giant steps and bending down into the space between your feet. For the core, find a patch of grass to do sit-ups.

Start with eight to 10 repetitions, or no more than you are comfortable with, and add sets with short breaks in between as you get stronger.

For a more complete workout, find a park or trail with outdoor exercise equipment, which is installed in one-third of park agencies, according to the National Recreation and Park Association. The equipment can range from basic pull-up bars to gym-style bench presses and rowing machines.

And many cities, including Chicago, San Antonio and Atlanta, offer free group classes outdoors.

HOW TO STAY MOTIVATED — EVEN IN BAD WEATHER

When it inevitably rains or the weather turns colder, it helps to keep in mind an old axiom: There's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing.

"If we have the clothing for whatever the temperatures are that we may be in, then we're more likely to go outside to be active when we need to," Rhea said.

She suggested investing in a jacket that breathes and a light hat with a brim you can use on sunny or rainy days.

Trainer Katie Higginbotham recommended having a contingency plan for inclement weather. Pick an area with surfaces that won't get slippery when wet or somewhere with some tree shelter so as not to be bombarded by rain.

On those days, having a regular exercise buddy really helps, said Higginbotham, who oversees quality control for TrainFitness, a U.K.-based private training provider.

"If you know someone is there waiting for you, it's difficult to say no at the last minute," she said.

Finally, it helps to set a goal, whether that is training for a 5K charity walk or a triathlon. If you're working toward something, it keeps you motivated to keep going, Sciolino said.

"When you have that day marked on your calendar, you have to perform these things or die out there," she said.

NORTH KOREAN ROCKET CARRYING ITS 2ND SPY SATELLITE EXPLODES SHORTLY AFTER LAUNCH

SAMSUNG

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한중…향후 北도발 이어질까?

황' 녹취 추가 공개

17.9℃

A rocket launched by North Korea to deploy the country's second spy satellite exploded shortly after liftoff Monday, state media reported, in a setback for leader Kim Jong Un's hopes to operate multiple satellites to better monitor the U.S. and South Korea.

Monday's failed launch came hours after leaders of South Korea, China and Japan met in Seoul in their first trilateral meeting in more than four years. It's highly unusual for North Korea to take provocative action when China, its major ally and economic pipeline, is engaging in high-level diplomacy in the region.

The launch drew rebukes from the North's neighbors because the U.N. bans North Korea from conducting any such launches, viewing them as covers for testing long-range missile technology.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency said it launched a spy satellite aboard a new rocket at its main northwestern space center. But KCNA said the rocket blew up during a first-stage flight soon after liftoff due to a suspected engine problem.

KCNA cited the unidentified vice director of the National Aerospace Technology Administration as saying that a preliminary examination showed that the explosion was related to the reliability of operation of the newly developed liquid oxygen-petroleum engine. He said other possible causes will be investigated, according to KCNA.

Japan's government briefly issued a missile warning for the southern prefecture of Okinawa, urging residents to take shelter inside buildings and other safer places. The warning was lifted

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報道 STATION 速報 避難の呼びかけ解除

⑬テレビ朝日

沖縄県 知事公室 防災危...

later because the region was no longer in danger, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said.

Japanese Defense Minister Minoru Kihara called the North's launch "a serious challenge to the entire world." The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command criticized the launch as a "brazen violation" of U.N. Security Council resolutions and said it involved technologies that are directly related to North Korea's intercontinental ballistic missile program. South Korea's Unification Ministry called a satellite launch by the North "a provocation that seriously threatens our and regional security."

North Korea has steadfastly maintained it has the right to launch satellites and test missiles in the face of U.S.-led military threats. North Korea says the operation of spy satellites will allow it to better monitor the U.S. and South Korea and improve the precision-striking capabilities of its missiles.

During the trilateral meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Chinese Premier Li Qiang earlier Monday, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol called for stern international action if North Korea went ahead with its launch plan.

Kishida, for his part, urged the North to withdraw its launch plan, but Li didn't mention the launch plan as he offered general comments about promoting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula through a political resolution.

Earlier Monday, North Korea had notified Japan's coast guard about its planned launch with a warning to exercise caution in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and

China and east of the main Philippine island of Luzon during a launch window from Monday through June 3.

Some observers say that North Korea's satellite launch on the first day of its eight-day window might have been aimed at casting a chill over the Seoul-Beijing-Tokyo meeting and registering its displeasure with China. Kim Jong Un has been embracing the idea of a "new Cold War" and seeking to boost ties with Beijing and Moscow to forge a united front against Washington, so China's diplomacy with Seoul and Tokyo might have been a disturbing development for Pyongyang.

Kim's primary focus in recent months has been on Russia, as Pyongyang and Moscow — both locked in confrontations with Washington — expand their military cooperation. China, which is much more sensitive about its international reputation, has joined Russia in blocking U.S.-led efforts at the U.N. Security Council to tighten sanctions on the North but has been less bold and open about supporting Kim's "new Cold War" drive.

North Korea's Foreign Ministry on Monday strongly criticized a joint statement issued by Li, Yoon and Kishida, calling it "wanton interference in its internal affairs." The ministry took issue with parts of the joint statement that said the three leaders re-emphasized their existing positions on the issue of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

While North Korea focused much of its criticism on South Korea for allegedly being chiefly responsible for the statement, it's still extremely

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rare for North Korea to slam a statement signed by China.

The failed satellite launch is a blow to Kim's plan to launch three more military spy satellites in 2024 in addition to his country's first military reconnaissance satellite that was placed in orbit last November.

The November launch followed two failed liftoffs.

In the first attempt, the North Korean rocket carrying the satellite crashed into the ocean soon after liftoff. After the second attempt, North Korea said there was an error in the emergency blasting system during the third-stage flight.

THE ‘MAD MAX’ SAGA TREADS (HARD-TO-FIND) WATER WITH FRUSTRATING ‘FURIOSA’

REVIEW

At the beginning of "Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga," we are introduced to a kick-ass woman who rides a horse, then a motorbike, nails a few bad guys with sharpshooting finesse and fights off a mob. But it's not Furiosa — it's her mom.

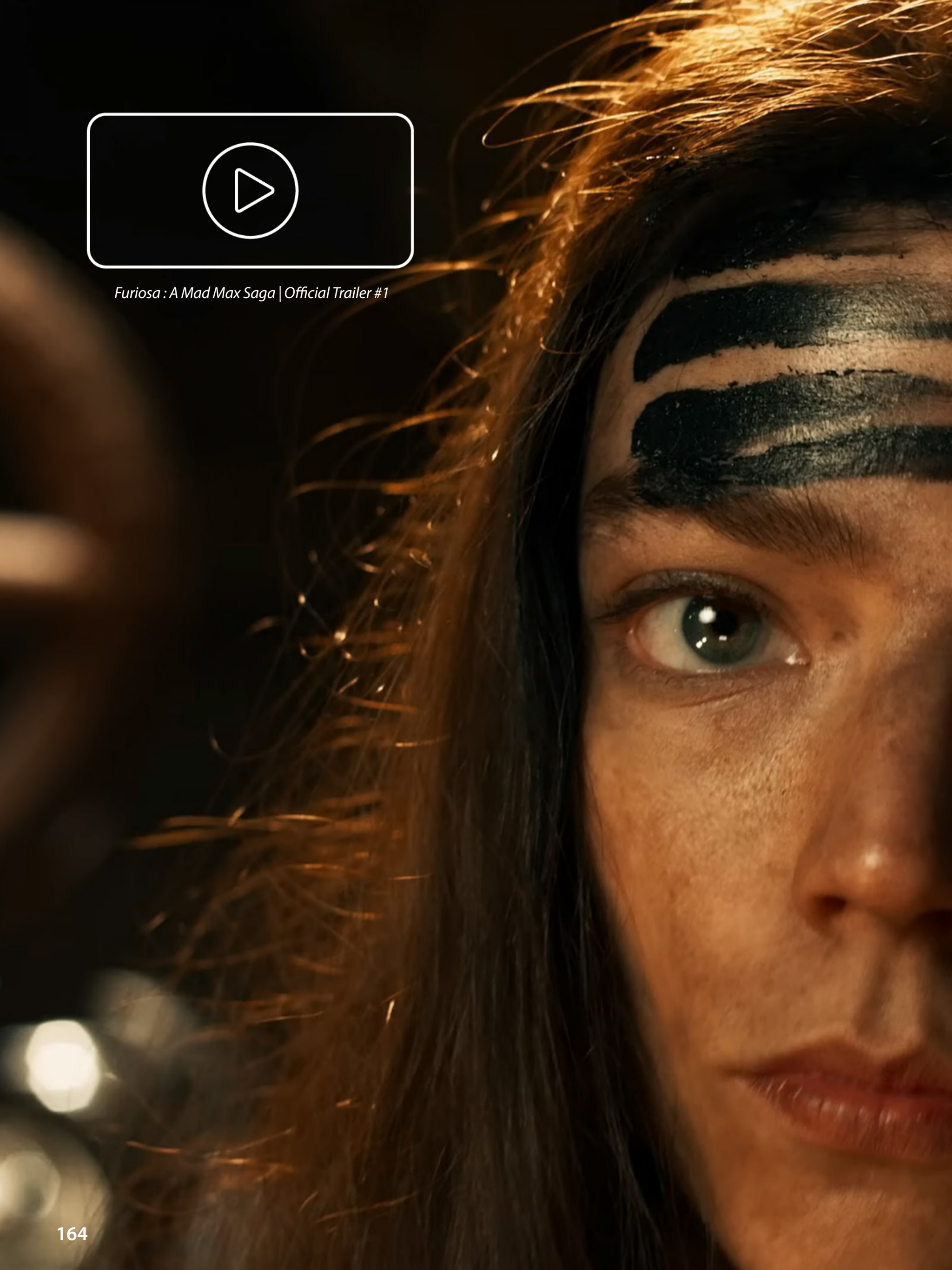
That's one of the oddities of this latest offering in the Mad Max Cinematic Universe: Creator and director George Miller has taken the coolest role of 2015's "Mad Max: Fury Road" and built a whole prequel around her yet has her overshadowed by everyone else.

The adult Furiosa — a coiled, clenched Anya Taylor-Joy — only appears after the first hour-mark — we get way too much preteen Furiosa — and she's meek for another quarter of the film. We, frankly, wanted more. Charlize Theron as Furiosa promised a "Top Gun" swagger yet Taylor-Joy mostly does furious side eye.

What goes into making adult Furiosa is very unpleasant: She endures childhood kidnapping and torture, goes mute, passes herself as a boy, gets traded for gas, works her way up a madman's hierarchy and only in the final scenes does she have real agency. We do learn how her left hand was maimed and that she was sweet on a guy. But making her mute? In her own movie?

Back are some familiar, scarred faces — Immortan Joe, The People Eater and a legion of half-naked War Boys. The new mega villain is Chris Hemsworth's Dementus, who has a hunger for human blood sausage and a knack for spectacularly murdering people who Furiosa cares about.

Miller has added pretentious chapter titles like he was making a black-and-white Czech New Wave exposition on existentialism — "The Pole of



Furiosa : A Mad Max Saga | Official Trailer #1

Inaccessibility" and "The Stowaway" are among the sections — despite also employing a narrator.

By the time Miller is finished, he's built an epic, gritty history in the Wasteland like "Lord of the Rings" or "Game of Thrones." But was the point of this franchise a better understanding of the negotiating tactics of untrusty warlords in a hellscape? No: It was rocket-propelled grenades, motorcycles, chains, massive sandstorms and cracked skulls.

The best action sequence happens at the halfway point — not a good omen — with a 15-minute sequence inside, over and under a barreling silver double-tanker War Rig while it is being attacked by motorbikes, buggies and parachuting adversaries. It's a marvel, truly, but since 2015 we've had cooler moments in things like "Mission: Impossible" and "Fast and Furious" so, sorry, mind not blown.

Viewers also spend time whipping through the Citadel, the Bullet Farm and Gas Town but there's something missing, that unpredictable spark of madness, maybe. Perhaps once you've seen an insane guy chained to the outside of a zooming truck playing guitar solos in front of a wall of amps with fire coming out of the headstock, the shock wears off.

Speaking of heavy metal, Hemsworth wears fingerless gloves, a codpiece, leather pants, a sleeveless leather vest and flowing hair, like he was a member of Mötley Crüe circa 1983. He has decided to perform his role in full psychotic camp — licking the tears of a victim, he describes them as "zesty" — and proves it by incorporating a teddy bear into his ensemble. Perhaps he should have his own stand-alone movie because he

Furiosa : A Mad Max Saga | Official Trailer #2

Furiosa : A Mad Max Saga | Sneak Peek
"Chapters" Trailer

doesn't really fit in here as the deranged comedy monster in a film with grim faces and famine.

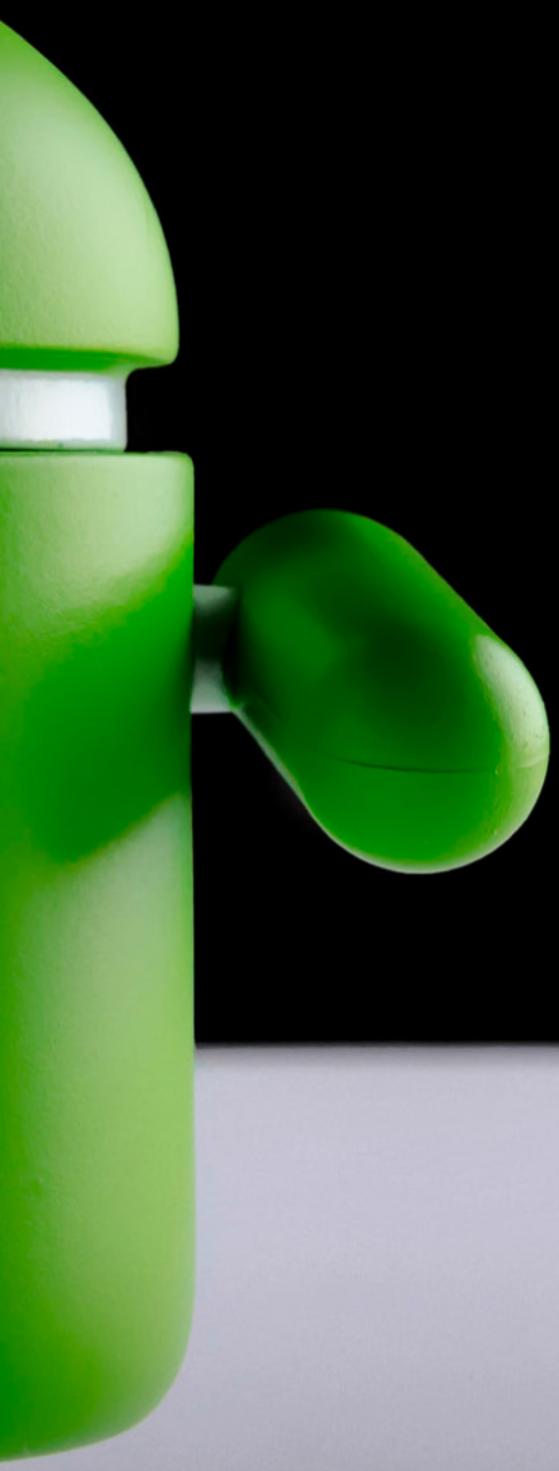
A large part of the problem here is that young Furiosa is on an epic hero's quest to go home — like "The Odyssey" or any "John Wick" movie — but we know from "Fury Road" that the Green Place is no more. So "Furiosa" then just becomes a catalogue of crazy stuff that happens to her until it morphs into her cold-blooded quest for revenge. There's no real risk either because we know Furiosa lives to team up with Tom Hardy in 2015.

It feels like with this fifth Mad Max installment, Miller is trying to add operatic heft and seriousness to what started in 1979 as a fun, rip-roaring smear of nightmarish, post-apocalyptic motor oil. In that case, "Fury Road" was fantastic, but "Furiosa" is just fine.

"Furiosa," a Warner Bros. Pictures release, is rated R for "sequences of strong violence, and grisly images." Running time: 148 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

MPAA definition of R: Restricted. Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.
Online: https://www.furiosaamadmaxsaga.com

JUDGE WEIGHS PROPOSED CHANGES TO GOOGLE'S ANDROID APP STORE TO PREVENT ANTICOMPETITIVE TACTICS



Google is tried to confront the latest in a succession of legal attacks on its digital empire as federal judge began to address anticompetitive practices in the app market for smartphones powered by its Android software.

The San Francisco court hearing before U.S. District Judge James Donato comes five months after a nine-person jury decided Google had turned its Play Store for Android phone apps into an illegal monopoly following a four-week trial in an antitrust case brought by Epic Games, the maker of Fortnite.

At the start of the hearing, Donato told lawyers for both parties not to revisit the jury's verdict, which is now "carved in stone." He also said that the case is about "competing generally," and he is "not looking for a relief that gives a helping hand just to Epic."

The verdict has given Epic a chance to persuade Donato to impose sweeping restrictions and other changes on how Google manages the distribution of Android apps. Those apps enable a wide range of services on virtually every phone that isn't made by Apple.

At the hearing, Donato heard from experts on both sides arguing over Epic's sweeping proposed changes to Google's app store. Under Epic's key proposals, Google would be required to make all Android apps in the Play Store available to competing stores — and also distribute rival app stores directly to consumers who want to download them. Basically, it would have to put competing app stores in its own app store to boost rivals' chances of getting discovered by consumers.

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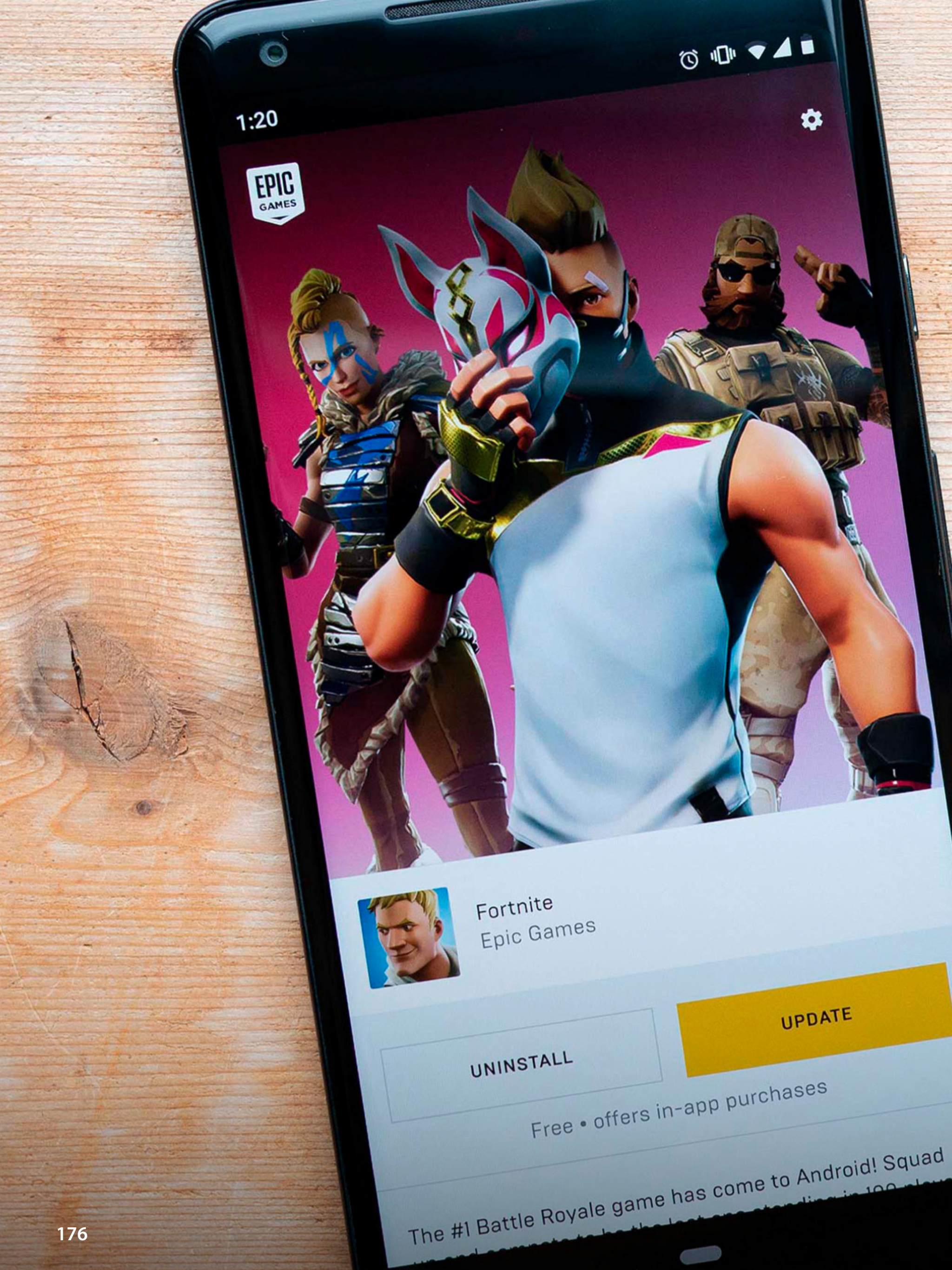
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EPIC GAMES
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UPDATE
Free • offers in-app purchases
The #1 Battle Royale game has come to Android! Squad

This, Epic argues, would help level the playing field for new and smaller competitors since Google's app is boosted by a network effect — it has the dominant app and the most users.

These remedies would eventually expire, although it is not clear when. Epic proposed six years, but it was unclear if Donato would allow that. Six years, he said, "strikes me as an awfully long time."

Google — which as Donato pointed out filed 90 pages of objections to Epic's proposals earlier this month — argued that its network effect advantages existed long before it gained monopoly power.

Epic also wants Donato to forbid Google from requiring the Play Store to be automatically installed on Android phones and appoint an oversight committee to ensure the new order is followed.

In court documents leading up to the hearing, Google argued Epic's proposals would have a chilling effect on the Play Store that would do more harm than good for the consumers and developers of Android apps.

At the hearing, Donato appeared skeptical of this argument, saying that while Google seems to be assuming "without any evidence" a dark, dystopian future if Epic gets its way, "there is an equally reasonable probability that it will be the best thing that has ever happened, so it is a value-neutral choice."

To Google's arguments that rival, unscrupulous app stores could compromise consumer privacy, Donato said the tech giant doesn't have data to support it — and asked if it's "in any way different than what Google already does?"

While Google is predicting a "terrifying world of chaos and anarchy" if Epic's proposals are implemented, Donato said, "I just don't buy it."

This, he said, is the consequence of breaking antitrust laws.

"You are going to repair the damage, and that means you (might) have a less-than-ideal situation from a competitive perspective for a remedial period," he said.

As Apple does on its store for iPhone apps, Google makes billions of dollars annually from its Play Store for Android apps through a commission system that charges a fee of 15% to 30% on a variety of digital transactions. Epic and other makers of popular apps, such as Spotify and Match Group, have been attacking those in-app commissions as an abusive tactic that gouges consumers as well as them.

Epic is pushing Donato to require Google to ban many of the practices that enabled the Play Store to stifle alternatives to the Play Store that would have charged far lower commissions that could help bring down prices and foster more competition that could spawn more innovation.

Donato did not make a ruling but said closing arguments for the case would likely be held in August.

Google is trying to minimize the upheaval to its lucrative Android ecosystem just weeks after its lawyers delivered the closing arguments i n an even more consequential antitrust case targeting its dominant search engine. A ruling in that case filed by the U.S. Justice Department isn't expected until later this summer or autumn.

Image: Patrick T. Fallon

In the Play store case, Google contends a series of concessions that it's making as part of a $700 million settlement it made in another antitrust case brought by attorneys general across the U.S. already have ensured there will be more competition.

The settlement, reached before the Epic case went to trial, will pay at least $2 to each of the more than 100 million consumers covered by it while requiring Google to lower the barriers that have made it difficult for rival options to the Play Store.

Epic, which has derided the attorneys general settlement as ineffectual, is seeking more stringent measures that would handcuff Google and make it easier for rival app stores to connect with consumers with Android phones.

Image: Dado Ruvic

T-MOBILE TO BUY ALMOST ALL OF U.S CELLULAR IN DEAL WORTH $4.4 BILLION WITH DEBT

T-Mobile is buying U.S. Cellular's wireless operations and certain spectrum assets in a deal valued at $4.4 billion, and further consolidating the industry.

T-Mobile would get more than 4 million new customers and control of U.S. Cellular's wireless operations and about 30% of spectrum assets across several spectrum bands. T-Mobile will also enter into a new master license agreement on more than 2,000 towers and extend the lease term for the approximately 600 towers where T-Mobile is already a tenant.

T-Mobile CEO Mike Sievert said the deal will "create a better experience for all of our customers with more coverage and more capacity."

It may also signal the start of more consolidation in an industry with fewer players than ever. "The writing is on the wall for the carriers and consolidation is now on the horizon and could speed up into 2025," said Wedbush Securities analyst Dan Ives. "This is the first shot across the bow in the wireless world and we expect more deals over the next year.

T-Mobile is among the more active companies in telecommunications with regard to mergers and acquisitions. In 2020 T-Mobile completed the takeover of smaller rival Sprint. And in 2013 the Federal Communications Commission approved its merger with MetroPCS Communications Inc.

T-Mobile said that U.S. Cellular customers will gain access to its 5G network, giving them better coverage and speed. The company said the deal will particularly benefit those that live in underserved rural areas of the country.

ellular

"In the face of rising competition and increasing capital intensity required to keep pace with the latest technologies, and following our careful and deliberate strategic review, we are confident that continuing to deliver on our mission requires a level of scale and investment that is best achieved by integrating our wireless operations with those of T-Mobile," U.S. Cellular Chair LeRoy Carlson Jr. said in a statement.

T-Mobile said that U.S. Cellular customers will be able to remain on their current plans or switch to an unlimited T-Mobile plan of their choice. They will not incur switching costs if a plan change is made.

That is a mixed bag for consumers, said Ives at Wedbush.

"The U.S. consumer has less choice but there is more competition and this could drive prices lower," Ives said.

The transaction includes a combination of cash and up to about $2 billion of assumed debt. Up to $100 million of the cash component is contingent on hitting certain financial and operational metrics between the deal's signing and closing.

U.S. Cellular will keep about 70% of of its spectrum portfolio across several spectrum bands.

The deal has been unanimously approved by the boards of United States Cellular Corp. and Telephone and Data Systems Inc, which is a majority shareholder of U.S. Cellular. It is expected to close in mid-2025.

U.S. Cellular's stock jumped more than 2% in morning trading after the announcement.

EUROPE'S CYBERSECURITY CHIEF SAYS DISRUPTIVE ATTACKS HAVE DOUBLED IN 2024, SEES RUSSIA BEHIND MANY

Disruptive digital attacks, many linked to Russian-backed groups, have doubled in the European Union in recent months and are also targeting election-related services, according to the EU's top cybersecurity official.

Juhan Lepassaar, head of the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity, or ENISA, told in an interview that attacks with geopolitical motives have steadily risen since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022.

"The number of hacktivist attacks (against) European infrastructure — threat actors whose

16:38

main aim is to cause disruption — has doubled from the fourth quarter of 2023 to the first quarter of 2024," Lepassaar said at the agency's headquarters in Athens.

"It's quite a significant increase," he said.

Citizens from the EU's 27 member states will vote June 6-9 for lawmakers in the European Parliament in an election that will also shape the EU's executive branch, the European Commission. On Wednesday, Belgian officials said police carried out searches at the residence of an employee of the European Parliament and at his office in the Parliament's building in Brussels over suspected Russian interference. Elections, also due in the United States, Britain and multiple other countries, have alerted security agencies to the threat of disruption campaigns funded by adversaries.

ENISA has led exercises and intense consultations to harden the resilience of election-related agencies in the EU for the past seven months. In an annual report for 2023, the agency noted a surge in ransomware attacks and incidents targeting public institutions.

Lepassaar said that attack methods — while not always successful — were often tried out in Ukraine before being expanded to EU countries.

"This is part of the Russian war of aggression, which they fight physically in Ukraine, but digitally also across Europe," he said.

Experts warn that artificial intelligence tools are also being used to target Western voters at accelerating speed and scale with misleading or false information, including hyperrealistic video and audio clips known as deepfakes.

Dir. Haines

enisa
EUROPEAN
UNION AGENCY
FOR CYBERSECURITY

"It's been emphasized, also by member states' cybersecurity agencies, that AI-enabled disinformation and information manipulation is a big threat," Lepassaar said.

His comments echo a warning made this month by U.S. Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines that technological progress will make more nations and groups able to launch effective disinformation campaigns.

U.S. and European experts are helping security agencies to try and anticipate emerging digital threats and vulnerabilities over this decade, with ENISA identifying food production, satellite management and self-driving vehicles as areas requiring attention.

Cybersecurity, Lepassaar argues, will inevitably need to become second nature to designers and consumers.

"I do believe that we have a societal challenge ahead of us to understand digital security in the same way that we understand, security in the everyday traffic environment," he said.

"When we are driving, we are aware of what is going on around us. We are alert," he said. "The same kind of behaviors and habits are what we need to also instill when we operate in any kind of a digital environment."

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